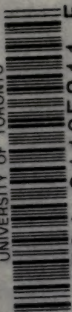


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ALSACE-LORRAINE

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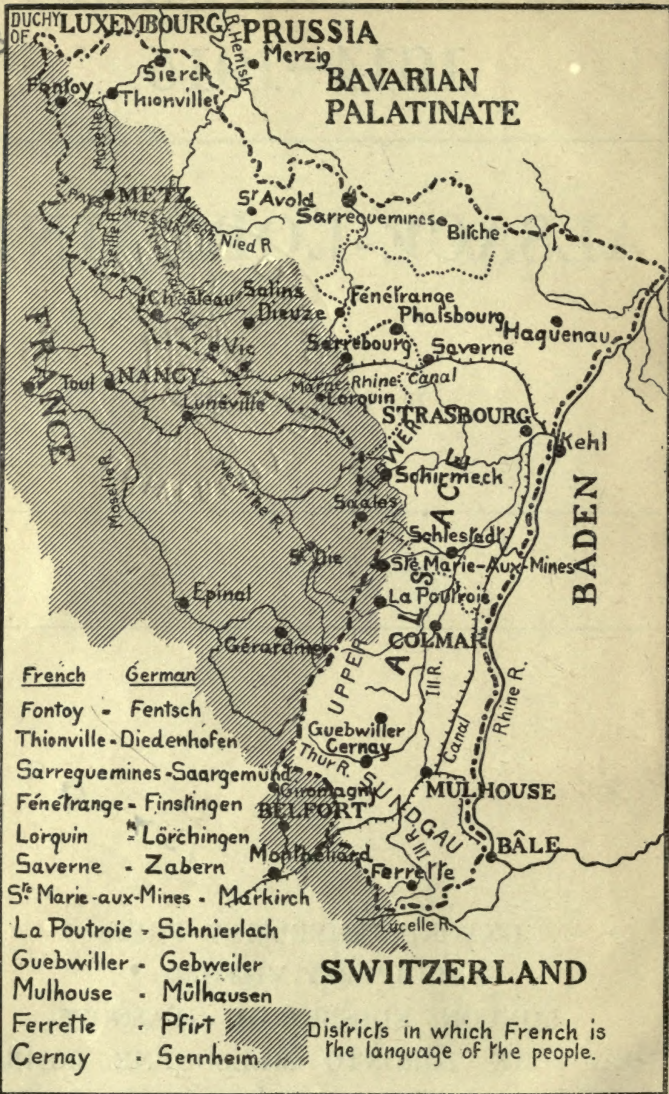
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ALSACE-LORRAINE



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FRANCE is not at war about Alsace-Lorraine, but nobody doubts that if the Germans are beaten she will get back the provinces torn from her forty-four years ago. Her sacrifices, her credit, her security require their restitution, and since an unprovoked attack upon her has revived the memory of her bitterest humiliation, her people will be content with nothing less. But French pride and French power are not alone concerned. There is a sense of justice to be satisfied, and the desire for a lasting settlement. Perhaps some Englishmen are a little doubtful (though their sympathies are heartily with our Ally) whether a better could not be devised in the interest both of the inhabitants and of European tranquillity. They have been told that the problem is delicate and complex. It is clearly less simple than it was before the German experiment, which has failed, but has inevitably introduced new factors. Is there no case for compromise, for an equitable partition, or for the establishment of a neutral 'buffer' state?

Before attempting to answer this question, let us go back to the Treaty of Frankfort (May 10, 1871), by which Alsace-Lorraine, the Reichsland, came into being. The Germans, when they exacted the surrender of French territory ¹ as part of the price of peace, did nothing for which history does not furnish precedents in plenty;

¹ It comprised the department of the Lower Rhine, almost all that of the Upper Rhine, more than half the department of the Moselle, a third of the Meurthe and a corner of the Vosges. All the Alsace of history, except Belfort, is included in this territory, and about the third part of the Duchy of Lorraine, with Metz and the Pays Messin

they only denied—in contradiction to the spirit of the time—the right of human groups, conscious of a collective personality, to dispose of themselves and to choose their allegiance. This right, which could have no meaning while national sentiment was weak and vacillating and the desires of subjects inarticulate, had gradually imposed itself—rather by the force of experience than with the authority of a doctrine—upon the respect of Christendom. It had, even in modern times, been more than once subordinated to diplomatic convenience, overborne by ambitious rulers or misguided nations; but never without protest. Far oftener, during the nineteenth century, it had been successfully asserted—against Napoleon, against the Turk, against the Austrian—with the applause of Europe. Only a few years earlier, the cession of Savoy and Nice to France had been submitted to a popular vote.¹ In the case of Alsace-Lorraine, the consent of the population was dispensed with. But before their nationality was taken from them, the free institutions under which they had lived happily allowed their protest to be heard. The solemn declaration of all their Deputies, elected by a last act of citizenship, under the invader's eye, to the Assembly at Bordeaux, records the historic refusal of a million and a half of French citizens to become German subjects.

Failing the consent of their new compatriots, the victors were willing to justify the annexation upon other grounds. Of its military object German statesmen made no secret.² But their apologists were not content

¹ April 22, 1860. There were 135,449 voters on the register: 130,839 voted; 130,533 approved the cession.

² The new frontier corresponded pretty nearly with that traced in anticipation of victory by the Prussian general staff ('the map with

to say that a strategic frontier was necessary to the new Empire, and that necessity knows no law. They appealed to history, to race, to language, to that very principle of nationalities of which the Treaty of Frankfort embodies in fact a flagrant violation.¹ With a curious pedantry they argued that Alsace-Lorraine had been an integral part of Germany until by force and fraud the French got possession of it. Its people, of German blood and German speech, had never ceased to belong to the German nation. In reclaiming them at last, united Germany was only vindicating an ancient imprescriptible right. To these allegations there is one answer which makes it unnecessary to test their accuracy. It is that since human beings are not chattels but reasonable creatures, no argument drawn from a past state of things, from kinship or from community of speech, can justify the forcible incorporation of a group of men into a system which they regard as alien, or their severance from a system which they prefer and with which they recognize their affinity. If the Alsatians and the Lorrainers had desired to become German, all other reasons would be superfluous; since they were unwilling, no reasons whatever can avail.

The German apology has not convinced the world, but these assertions, irrelevant as they are, have undeniably impressed it. It is therefore worth while, by way of parenthesis, to qualify their crudity.

1. The question of race, for what it is worth, is not the green border') at an early stage of the war. The exception was the city of Belfort with the zone of its fortifications, which was finally left in French hands in exchange for the additional surrender of a few places on the Luxembourg border, particularly valuable on account of mineral wealth.

¹ See Mommsen's *Letters to the Italian People* (1870) and the answer of Fustel de Coulanges.

settled by hasty generalization. Caesar found these countries inhabited by Gauls and harried by Germans. Whatever the racial significance of their incursions and their colonies in early centuries, the Celtic strain certainly endures. In Alsace, a physical type characteristically Gallic is met with not infrequently ; in Lorraine it appears to predominate on either side of the present frontier. A man from Metz looks like a man from Nancy, and both look uncommonly like Frenchmen. It is, besides, preposterous to forget intermarriage, as if Alsace and Lorraine while they were parts of France had been insulated from the rest of the country.

2. French is the mother-tongue of a few small districts in Alsace (Schirmeck, Ste-Marie-aux-Mines, La Poutroye, the Valley of the Bruche), and of a considerable portion of Lorraine across the frontier, including Metz¹ and the Pays Messin, where German, until the annexation, was never heard. In the north-eastern corner of Lorraine, the people speak a German dialect closely resembling that which prevails in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Another German dialect is spoken by the immense majority of native Alsatians. French, before the war, was very generally spoken by the educated classes at Strasbourg, Mulhouse, Colmar, Thionville, and in other towns where the popular speech is Germanic. It was, of course, everywhere understood.

3. Alsace and Lorraine, after being occupied successively by Gauls, Romans, Alamans and Franks, became attached in the ninth and tenth centuries to the Holy Roman Empire. Their fortunes were different. From the fifteenth century onward the Duchy of Lorraine was

¹ I have heard the remark that Metz 'sounds German'. It is pronounced *Messe*. *Tz* for *z* or *ts* at the end of French names is rather common. Cf. Gretz, Batz, Beaumetz, Retz.

an autonomous and considerable state: its rulers, while acknowledging the Emperor's nominal suzerainty, alternately leaned upon the French king and quarrelled with him, and often played an active part in French affairs. Alsace, for some hundreds of years before it became French, was little more than a geographical expression, in which were included self-governing republics and the Ten Free Towns, episcopal fiefs, hereditary fiefs of the House of Austria, and counties and baronies innumerable. The morality of the several transactions by which, between 1551 and 1766, the kingdom of France acquired the two provinces, has been diversely appreciated. In the religious wars Henry II protected the Protestant princes of Germany against Charles V, and was invited by them, as a reward, to take possession of the three episcopal cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun. After the Thirty Years' War, the Empire ceded its rights over Alsace (but in terms of singular obscurity) to Louis XIV. Strasbourg retained its virtual independence until 1681, when it was beset by the King's armies and capitulated. The Duchy of Lorraine, with that of Bar, fell peacefully to France by a kind of family arrangement. Lastly, in 1798, the little Swiss Commonwealth of Mulhouse, once included in Alsace, was at its own desire incorporated in the French Republic. It is not pretended that in any of these instances a German population was wrenched by France from a homogeneous political system. No doubt Metz in the sixteenth century, Strasbourg in the seventeenth, would have preferred a prosperous neutrality, if in those troubled times independence could have been reconciled with safety. Perhaps between Stanislas and the Revolution Lorraine sometimes regretted the desertion of its last ruler of the native line, the husband

of Maria Theresa. But it is a fact that from the first the French kings set themselves to win the confidence of their new subjects ; and the evidence is overwhelming that they succeeded in a delicate task. The assimilation of Alsace was discreet and gradual. Its governors were in general well chosen. Its distinctive traditions and its language were respected. Its industries were fostered, and for the first time in their history its people felt themselves secure. The Protestants of Alsace were privileged ; so were the Jews of Metz. As for the Duchy of Lorraine, it was in essentials French already before it was united to the kingdom of France. What was left to do was done by the Revolution. Lorraine and Alsace embraced its doctrines with enthusiasm. The *Marseillaise* was sung for the first time in the house of the mayor of Strasbourg. The Republican spirit indeed was in the blood of the Strasbourgeois and of the Messin ; and to no part of France did the extinction of feudal rights bring greater relief than to these provinces, where so many foreign princelings still had privileges. In the repulse of the invader and in the Napoleonic wars Alsace and Lorraine played a glorious part. They gave to the French armies Ney and Kellermann, Kléber and Lefebvre, to name no lesser heroes. And from Napoleon's fall until the end of the French connexion, their loyalty remained above reproach ; they were visibly prosperous, undeniably contented ; and they contributed freely and conspicuously to all the activities of the national life.

The Germans in 1871 had little to gain by an appeal from the reluctance of the conquered provinces to their remoter history ; but the past does throw some light upon the chances with which the experiment of annexation started. Its success—a gradual moral conquest

confirming the material—would, without question, have purchased in time the world's condonation for an abuse of victory ; and perhaps success was not impossible, though the task was far more difficult than that which the French monarchy assumed when it replaced a complicated insecurity in old Alsace by firm and equal government. It was not so easy for the Germans to attach to a system which was itself upon probation a people which had thought itself happy in its long association with the French fortunes. And for that heavier undertaking they had no similar aptitude. The attractive genius of France has easily reconciled diversities of race and speech upon her borders : it is no wonder if the Alsatians made as good Frenchmen as Basques, or Bretons, or Flemings. But among the German virtues that virtue of the imagination which we call sympathy is wanting. And it seems in this instance as if their crazy theory of race had persuaded the conquerors that no effort on their part was needed to accustom these new Germans to a change of nationality which involved a change of status.

For they had been free citizens of a homogeneous commonwealth ; and now they entered a federal system upon an exceptional footing of subordination to its five-and-twenty sovereign States. Alsace-Lorraine, the ransom of France, was in this sense a pledge of German unity, that it had been won by their joint effort under the leadership of Prussia. By the logic of conquest it became, not a new member of the federation, but the common property of all. And though since 1871 the machinery of its government has been readjusted more than once, the most plausible 'concessions'¹ have

¹ Until 1874 it was governed directly from the Imperial Chancellery through an Ober-präsident at Strasbourg ; then by a Statthalter

still maintained it in the condition of a subject province, dependent (as none of the German States depend) upon the will and pleasure of the Emperor, the Federal Council, and the Imperial Parliament at Berlin. It is not certain that a real and not precarious autonomy within the Empire—such, let us suppose, as is guaranteed to the tiny principality of Reuss—would have assured the whole-hearted acquiescence of the population in the new order of things: but that was apparently the best chance, and it was not taken. Indeed it must be evident that this constitutional inequality was indispensable, if the methods of Germanization which are most agreeable to the Prussian spirit were to be employed. They may be described in two words: colonizing and repression.

An army of officials, schoolmasters, clerks, shopkeepers, artisans, from the hungrier States of the Empire, began at once to pour into the Reichsland—the grateful clients and the industrious servants of the central powers; and the invasion did not cease when it had filled the room left vacant by the exodus of natives, of whom some thousands forsook their homes to keep their nationality. Alsace-Lorraine—economically a German dumping-ground—has been administered primarily in the interest of strangers: their growing numbers, their services, their demands, with four Secretaries of State appointed by the Emperor. From 1874 until 1911 there was a Provincial Delegation of 30 (later of 56) members, chosen by indirect suffrage, at first a purely consultative body, which in 1879 obtained limited powers of legislation subject to the veto of the Federal Council, but no control over the Executive. In 1911 a Constitution was granted to Alsace-Lorraine, or rather imposed upon it, by the central powers: the chief innovation was a Diet of two houses (the lower elected by the people), and the representation of the Reichsland upon the Federal Council by two Deputies—Imperial nominees.

have largely determined the policy pursued, and in particular the successive steps in the direction of legislative independence which have proved but a lure to the original population. The immigrants, however, have disappointed the hopes of the Pan-Germanists. They are still a minority; they are liable to homesickness; and they have shown themselves powerless to leaven the lump. Immigrant families, on the contrary, have been known to become good Alsatians within a generation; but, upon the whole, in all these years there has been no real contact between Wälsche (or Französling) and Schwob,¹ let alone anything like fusion.

German rule in the annexed provinces has been sometimes spoken of, with excusable exaggeration, as cruelly oppressive. It is nearer the mark to call it, in general terms, irksome, suspicious, provocative, and, above all else, incredibly tactless. For though there have been cases enough of oppression in the strict sense, it must not be supposed that the Alsatians, or even the French-speaking people of the Pays Messin, have been usually treated like mere Poles. There was even a short period when, under the first Statthalter, a Saxon—Manteuffel—a policy of conciliation, of regard for local feeling, of scrupulous impartiality, seemed about to be tried. The clamour of the Pan-Germans soon obliged the kind and courteous old soldier to repent. The charge of weakness was rebutted by acts of palpable tyranny; and it was then that the 'dictatorship clause' was first brought into force, which allowed the executive at its sole discretion to place the Reichsland under a reign of terror. But, apart from exceptional moments, the constant spirit of the Imperial

¹ The Alsatian name for a German suggests that the first enemies of Alsace were Suabians.

administration has been expressed by the relentless persecution of the French language, the effacement of old landmarks, the outraging of local piety, the proscription of every emblem that could suggest the memory of happier days. The native press has been muzzled, and a system of delation organized in every village; men have been sent to jail for whistling a tune, and women fined for wearing a ribbon or a flower; students' societies, athletic clubs, professional corporations have been broken up on suspicion of a vague Gallicizing tendency. And the method has its comic as well as its odious side. Zealous functionaries contributed after their kind to the Germanizing process by insisting that the Christian name of René should be registered Renatus, and by changing 'restaurant' to 'Restauration', and 'coiffeur' to 'Friseur'.

Both elements were present in the notorious but not unprecedented business of Saverne, which startled all Europe at the end of 1913. In that quiet town of Lower Alsace, an ill-conditioned Prussian subaltern provoked some effervescence by abusing the Alsatians before his men, and the military lost their heads in trying to restore order. There was laughter—not only in Saverne—when it was known that young Hotspur could not venture so far as the pastrycook's or the tobacconist's without an escort—fixed bayonets to protect him from the jeering urchins of the place! There was some indignation, too, about the crippled cobbler who was spitted for flouting the majesty of the Prussian uniform, and the civil notabilities who were clapped into a damp cellar for protesting. The Strasbourg court-martial, the acquittal of the responsible chief, the Crown Prince's congratulations, were a revelation to some of us; and our newspapers talked a good

deal at the time about North Germans and South Germans and the overriding of civil rights by military privilege. But the real lesson of the incident was that in forty years and more the Prussians had made no progress in the task of governing a province in spite of itself, and that the subject people was not only not assimilated, but by no means cowed.

The resistance of Alsace-Lorraine, which has never taken the form of rebellion or of conspiracy, and has been the more effective for that, is a consoling page to read in recent European history. It has been maintained against all kinds of pressure by a population in great part deprived of its natural leaders: for within the interval allowed by the Treaty of Frankfort, most of those who had the means to leave the country, and many who risked their livelihood by leaving, declared themselves Frenchmen, and sought a new home in France, in Algeria, or abroad. Those who remained were made more helpless by this exodus. Moreover, the general belief that the French would soon return was unfavourable to an active defence of their immediate interests. For some years Alsace-Lorraine languished in a sullen passivity, nursing its hope and its regrets, content to express its fidelity by sending its fifteen deputies time after time to Parliament with a single mandate—to protest. There was some effort, in Manteuffel's early days, to throw off this indifference to the present; but it was the critical period which followed—marked as it was by frontier incidents, trials, expulsions, domiciliary visits, the closing of private schools, the virtual exclusion of visitors from France—that ended by converting the provinces to a new policy since known as Nationalism. It is the policy of the generation which had grown up under

German rule and had got to know the Germans. Its aim has been 'to make the house fit to live in', while reserving the larger question of justice for the future. It had its centre, Colmar; and its leaders—such men as the Abbé Wetterlé, MM. Preiss and Blumenthal; and its method was a political opportunism implying no sacrifice of sentiment, but guided by a sure sense of reality and by the will to endure. The Nationalists in the Reichstag and the Delegation have consented to form temporary alliances with German parties—the Catholic Centre, the Social Democrats—in order to achieve certain practical results; the abolition of the odious dictatorship and a relative emancipation of the press are the most substantial of them. They could not succeed in winning for the Reichsland a position of complete equality with the other States; and the new constitution which replaced the Delegation by a Diet, while maintaining an irresponsible executive, was accepted, not as a concession, but as an attempt (which has been defeated) to crumble the particularist opposition into groups easily absorbed by the great divisions of German parliamentarism. But the resistance has by no means been confined to public action. It was impossible to cut off all intercourse between natives of the Reichsland and their kinsmen across the frontier, or to extirpate from the soil a language which seemed to confer a kind of aristocracy upon those who used it. The Prussian schoolmaster with his impudent travesties of history was no match for the Alsatian parent; Prussian pedantry has only stimulated the rich and subtle humour of old Alsace.¹ In the French-

¹ It is displayed, for example, in the dialect comedy which is a main part of the indigenous literature; more notoriously in the delicious caricatures of Zislin and 'Hansi' (J.-J. Waltz—now a French officer and serving in Alsace).

speaking districts of annexed Lorraine, where the native population has not even the advantage of understanding the usurpers, nationalism has upon the whole been less enterprising. Since Metz lost her great bishop, Mgr. Dupont des Loges, and her valiant tribune Antoine, the Messins, easily outnumbered by immigrants and soldiery, have found their chief consolation in anniversaries, in the study of their civic past and in the pious care of graves. But such episodes as that of 'la Lorraine sportive' illustrate their tenacity; and in the country-sides, where the clergy are the natural guardians of the French tradition, even the superficial signs of Germanization are wanting. Both provinces, in a word, have shown themselves spiritually invincible; and by the experience of altered conditions in the working have grown more and more conscious of a fundamental incongruity between two civilizations, that which they had irrevocably chosen, and that which has endeavoured vainly to assimilate them.

It is sometimes asked by foreigners whether Alsace-Lorraine would not have become a contented portion of the German Empire if the French had frankly accepted the result of their disasters and renounced the hope of recovering their lost territory. The only possible answer, for those who are familiar with the general direction of republican policy, is that, if anything could have finally discouraged the old population of the annexed provinces, it is the indifference to their prospects long exhibited by official France, with the implied assent of at least a considerable part of the French nation. Of course it is true that for a brief interval after the Terrible Year the eyes of nearly all Frenchmen were fixed upon the Vosges, the Rhine, and the Moselle. All France expected a fresh trial of strength,

and hoped for better fortune. It was the time when every town and almost every village in France had its little colony of exiles, among whom (to the ultimate detriment of their cause) not a few genuine Prussians mingled, abusing French hospitality under the shelter of an 'Alsatian' accent. The pathos of the case was then liberally exploited on the stage, in fiction, in the press, and at the tribune; the martyrdom of the severed brothers, their approaching rescue, the imminence of *la revanche*,¹ were romantic themes, handled for the most part somewhat childishly, and not always perhaps with complete sincerity. It is equally true that in the last few years French interest in Alsace-Lorraine has once more quickened, with a better knowledge of the facts; and that a revival of the old aspiration has been one sure sign of recovered vitality—just as the implicit renouncement of a whole intervening generation had been the most depressing symptom of a diminished national energy. Gambetta's famous 'N'en parlons jamais, pensons-y toujours', had announced a policy of indefinite adjournment, and lent an air of specious dignity to the mood of tacit resignation. The distracting influence of civil quarrels, colonial diversions, that vague terror of Caesarism following a successful war which long haunted the diplomacy of the Republic, a widely diffused prosperity counselling comfortable acquiescence, the emasculate theories of internationalists, the fact that the centre of gravity in French politics has shifted to a part of the country which its immunity from invasion and its happy climate predisposed to an

¹ As mistranslation plays some part in international affairs, it is worth while noting that *revanche* does not mean vengeance ('I will repay, saith the Lord'), but 'getting even', that is, the recovery of a lost advantage.

amiable materialism—all these causes contributed to keep the question of Alsace-Lorraine dormant in French minds. It would be easy to exaggerate their apathy. At no time have there been wanting patriots who refused to forget or to despair. For many, as for Paul Déroulède, the hope of reversing the decision of 1871 and of redressing the abuse of victory was a lifelong, all-absorbing passion. His League of Patriots had no other object. It has furnished the genius of Maurice Barrès with its most virile inspiration. And at critical moments (as when, in 1887, the Schnaebelé affair, which founded Boulanger's popularity, all but precipitated a new conflict) the attitude of the whole people showed how thinly the old wound was cicatrised. It may be added that no Frenchman speaking in the name of France ever dared to use language implying a formal acceptance of mutilated frontiers. But many, in the interests of a political propaganda, humanitarian or socialistic, were only too ready to profess themselves sceptical of Alsatian sympathies.

Now and again, a hasty visit to Strasbourg has had no other object than to corroborate surmises which would tend to release French consciences from the obligation of constancy. Stories of successful Germanization and a contented Reichsland were collected from German immigrants or the rare renegades among native Alsatians, or deduced from the negative results of an indiscreet catechism. A bitter experience of ubiquitous spies has made Alsatians—who are not demonstrative by nature—less inclined than ever to wear their hearts upon their sleeves. And the form of inquiry was often such that an honest answer might bear an ambiguous interpretation.—‘Are you loyal to the German Empire?’—‘We are its subjects and respect its laws; we are

not conspirators.'—'What is your aim?'—'To secure justice and autonomy by constitutional means. We want Alsace for the Alsatians.'—'Then you do not hope to become Frenchmen again?'—'Whatever our preferences, we know that only the sword can make us French. Does France desire war? We do not. We would rather remain as we are than that, because of us, such a calamity should visit the two nations.'—With such replies as these the inquisitive stranger had to be content. Naturally, they were made the most of by peace-mongers and Germanophils; and provoked a storm of protest among Alsatians in France as well as among such other Frenchmen as had enjoyed special opportunities of exploring the intimate predilections of the people. But few foresaw how soon events were to release them from their honourable reserve. All the anguish of choice has been spared them by the German aggression; and no one imagines Alsace-Lorraine disposed to cling to its masters in the hour of their defeat.

We may now revert to the question anticipated at the beginning of this paper, whether the case is one for compromise. It may be said that any alternative to pure and simple retrocession is of academic interest, because nothing but the failure of the allied arms can shake the resolve of the whole French people to make the provinces, not a French possession, but a part of France once more. Yet it is not an idle scruple which desires to be assured that a decision in which we for our part have no voice is one which we can applaud without hesitation as both just and hopeful. Let us then consider very briefly three other conceivable solutions of the problem: complete autonomy within the German Empire; national independence, with

guaranteed neutrality; the partition of the territory and population between Germany and France.

1. The first supposes the integrity of the Empire as at present constituted. Within it, the former Reichsland would become a Republic forming a new federal unit. It would frame its own constitution. It would be governed and administered by officers responsible to the people alone. This was, before the war, the nationalist ideal. It had no prospect of becoming a reality, and that for reasons which the war has made more peremptory still. For in the German (and especially the Prussian) view, Alsace-Lorraine is a pledge of German unity, the sign of German hegemony, and the spring-board for a fresh attack upon France. An Alsace-Lorraine which ceased to be that would have no value in German eyes; and Germany would consent to its autonomy only with a secret resolve to reduce it as soon as possible to the old subjection.

2. A new European State might be created—the 'buffer' state of Alsace-Lorraine. It would be neutral, and the Powers would guarantee its neutrality. With the warning of Belgium before us, the prospect is not very hopeful. A special danger would lie in the presence of German colonists—a constant pretext for German intervention. And there is no evidence that the people would be satisfied with this solution. A race so eminently military will hardly desire to be neutralized. Moreover, the internal harmony of such a state cannot be assured. It would not form a natural unit. The part of Lorraine annexed in 1871 is but a fragment. Lorrainers and Alsatians, though associated in misfortune, have little else in common but their former status of French citizens. In the sixteenth century, no doubt, the Duchy of Lorraine and the little commonwealths of Alsace

would have desired no other fate than to be allowed to live their life in complete independence of their powerful neighbours. It is too late to-day : history cannot be unmade.

'The first act of an Alsatian Republic', said an Alsatian patriot recently, 'would be to declare war upon France. France would then be forced to annex us!'

3. The Reichsland might be divided between France and Germany. But what would be the basis of division ? Language ? This would be mere pedantry, for speech is no sure index of sympathies. And what would be the fate of that portion of the country which remained German ? If its condition were still subordinate, imagine the reprisals that threaten the native population which has welcomed the French army ! If it received autonomy, all the objections to the first alternative apply.

None of these, in short, is a settlement at once equitable and likely to prove lasting. What else shall we conclude, but that unconditional restitution will alone completely redress the wrong done in 1871 ; alone satisfy the inclinations of those inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine who, because they belong to its soil and because they have suffered violence, have the sole right to be consulted ;¹ and will alone put these fair countries in possession of their full human resources by recalling to their homes the Alsatians and Lorrainers of the dispersion ? Above all, this is a settlement which will not be a leap in the

¹ The idea of a referendum, which has been plausibly put forward, finds no favour among Frenchmen who reflect that, if held under German control, it could not be considered as a test of indigenous feeling. It would be grotesquely unfair to ask German colonists whether they prefer that a country where they have no business should be French or German, while the very numerous natives driven into exile were excluded from the vote.

dark, but a return to an order of things which stood the test of many generations.

To say this is not to forget that the experiment which has failed has altered many things. Thoughtful Frenchmen are well aware that France and her lost provinces cannot meet as if they had only parted yesterday. Forty-four years of separate life have raised difficulties which did not exist before the Germans came. They believe that France can deal with them patiently and justly. There is the problem of the German immigrants. Not all of them, we may suppose, will wish to leave the country which has become their home ; there has been some—though relatively little—intermarriage between them and the old stock ; and wholesale expulsion would inflict hardship upon many innocent people. It will be the task of the Republic to mediate between the different elements of its population, and to promote their ultimate fusion. Again, the younger generation know little of France but by hearsay. The immense majority of Frenchmen have had no real contact with their former countrymen. It is inevitable that there should be surprises upon both sides. Her long insulation has undoubtedly made Alsace more than ever conscious of her distinctive moral personality, and the futile efforts of the Prussians to subdue her soul have stimulated a jealous attachment to her particular usages. French tact may be trusted to respect them. Since the French troops got a firm footing in Upper Alsace, the highest authorities have brought a message of fraternity and a promise of liberal treatment to the reclaimed districts. The responsible assurances of General Joffre and President Poincaré, like the welcome which French soldiers have found beyond the Vosges, are of the happiest augury for the future of the sturdy, refined, industrious,

and reasonable people of Alsace-Lorraine, whose virtues even the rich diversity of the French temperament has sorely missed, and whose faithfulness and fortitude command the sympathy of Europe.

SOME DOCUMENTS

1. The Declaration read, in the name of the representatives of the five departments concerned, before the French National Assembly at Bordeaux, March 1, 1871, after the vote ratifying the preliminaries of Peace :—

‘ Les représentants de l’Alsace et de la Lorraine ont déposé, avant toute négociation de paix, sur le bureau de l’Assemblée Nationale, une déclaration affirmant de la manière la plus formelle, au nom de ces deux provinces, leur volonté et leur droit de rester françaises.

Livrés, au mépris de toute justice et par un odieux abus de la force, à la domination de l’étranger, nous avons un dernier devoir à remplir. Nous déclarons encore une fois nul et non avenü un pacte qui dispose de nous sans notre consentement.

La revendication de nos droits reste à jamais ouverte à tous et à chacun dans la forme et dans la mesure que notre conscience nous dictera.

Au moment de quitter cette enceinte où notre dignité ne nous permet plus de siéger, et malgré l’amertume de notre douleur, la pensée suprême que nous trouvons au fond de nos cœurs est une pensée de reconnaissance pour ceux qui, pendant six mois, n’ont pas cessé de nous défendre, et d’inaltérable attachement à la patrie dont nous sommes violemment arrachés.

Nous vous suivrons de nos vœux et nous attendrons, avec une confiance entière dans l’avenir, que la France régénérée reprenne le cours de sa grande destinée.

Vos frères d’Alsace et de Lorraine, séparés en ce moment de la famille commune, conserveront à la France, absente de leurs foyers, une affection filiale, jusqu’au jour où elle viendra y reprendre sa place.’

2. GENERAL JOFFRE, at Thann, November, 1914 :—

‘Notre retour est définitif, vous êtes Français pour toujours.

La France apporte, avec les libertés qu'elle a toujours représentées, le respect de vos libertés à vous, des libertés alsaciennes, de vos traditions, de vos convictions, de vos mœurs.

Je suis la France, vous êtes l'Alsace ; je vous apporte le baiser de la France.’

3. PRESIDENT POINCARÉ, at Saint-Amarin, February 12, 1915 :—

‘Je viens confirmer aux populations d'Alsace les déclarations que leur a déjà faites le général Joffre. La France, heureuse d'ouvrir les bras à l'Alsace si longtemps et si cruellement séparée d'elle, ne doute pas que la victoire n'assure bientôt la délivrance des provinces qui lui ont été arrachées par la force ; et tout en respectant leurs traditions et leurs libertés elle leur rendra leur place au foyer de la patrie.’

WHY WE ARE AT WAR

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THE
EVOLUTION OF THOUGHT
IN MODERN FRANCE

BY
ERNEST DIMNET

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THE EVOLUTION OF THOUGHT IN MODERN FRANCE

THE object of the following pages is to account for the present state of public opinion and of national feeling in France by tracing them to their historic causes.

A war is one of the greatest trials that a nation can undergo : it taxes all its energies and possibilities and reveals its moral condition exactly as a great sentimental or intellectual crisis reveals the latent power or the unsuspected weakness of individuals. Under difficult circumstances of this kind a man not only acts but speaks in a manner which, whether to his credit or to his disgrace, proclaims the principles or the fallacies on which he has lived so far.

It is unquestionable that France has borne the brunt of the declaration of war, of the trying first weeks which followed, and of the slow months which elapsed after the battle of the Marne, in a manner which even her enemies must have admired, and which they probably did not expect. If you refer to the Yellow Paper (*Livre Jaune*) published in December 1914 by the French Government, you will find that the Germans had long cherished the idea that France was a decaying nation.

Were there traces of a similar notion, more or less conscious and reasoned, outside of Germany? It is impossible to deny it. Everybody must have met people who were surprised, even if they were delighted, to see France giving evidence of complete self-possession and following without effort the guidance of her best leaders.

Everybody must also remember meeting people who protested against this surprise and stated emphatically that they had always believed in the French nation, had never consented to look upon the French as modern *Graeculi* (the Greeks of the decadence) or, as a famous writer once said even less politely, as the monkeys in the European jungle.

Such differences of opinion can never be altogether unfounded; and the inference which a logical person who knew nothing of French history in the last four or five decades would draw could only be that conflicting tendencies must have been at work in French society. This conclusion is correct. Since 1870, the date when France, defeated by Germany, weakened furthermore by the Commune, and exhausted financially by the ransom (£200,000,000) she had to pay down to her conquerors, was left to heal her wounds as best she could—there have been two currents in French thought, consequently also in French morals, and according as observers happened to take note of one or the other, their impression was one of disgust or on the contrary of hopefulness.

Most people who followed the trend of French thought between the years 1876–95 were pessimistic. It is true that during the first five years after the war France gave a marvellous example of vitality. In those few years she managed to pay off the Germans who occupied her fortified towns along the eastern frontier, and she accomplished such a thorough reform of her military arrangements (keeping her soldiers under the colours for five years, rapidly improving her armament, and copying intelligently the organization of her enemies), that Bismarck became nervous and was for picking another quarrel the result of which must be her final destruction.

But this effort was the combination of a great national

impulse with the leadership of a politician who frequently came near to being a great statesman, M. Thiers, the first President of the Republic. It left the ideas of philosophers, scientists, literary people, journalists, and generally the so-called thinking circles where they were; and these ideas were practically the same which prevailed ten years before, under the Second Empire. Now, the ideas in the air during the Second Empire were not conducive to moral health. Nobody will deny that the most influential authors of that period were Hugo, Leconte de Lisle, Baudelaire, Michelet, Quinet, George Sand, Flaubert, the Goncourts, Dumas, and—among the more philosophic writers—Littré, Auguste Comte, Taine, and Renan. I know that besides these names others could be mentioned—Caro, Veuillot, Lacordaire, Montalembert, O. Feuillet, for instance—which would point to a different direction of thought; but it will be found that none of them is really representative, and that their celebrity either did not last, or only came, as in the case of Veuillot, long after the writer's death, or was confined to a small section of the public. In fact when we ask ourselves who were the Prophets of that day, as an accurate and instructive critic, M. Guérard, calls them, it is the list I first gave that inevitably occurs.

Now, one general characteristic of those writers is that, when compared with the best-known English writers of the middle Victorian period, they strike us at once as being what is called advanced. This expression is probably taken from the military vocabulary. Some people have a way of thinking which immediately suggests the vanguard of an army, or even its forlorn hope. And there is something invariably attractive in that position; originality, daring, contempt for ready-made notions, all imply brilliance and at first sight a quality akin to courage.

It is only on second thoughts we realize that, given certain conditions of the mental atmosphere, it requires no mean courage to be on the conservative or prudent side ; that there is little danger in running the gauntlet of criticism when one has popularity on one's side ; and that we all, more or less, have occasionally notions which we know are brilliant and might be dazzling if we chose to give them expression, but which, as Charlotte Brontë said, we feel we had better keep to ourselves.

In fact all those famous writers appear to-day to have been unduly advanced on some points, and several of them (as I shall have occasion to repeat) became aware of it themselves.

To begin with the philosophers, it was a good thing to rise above the shallow eclecticism of Cousin, who imagined he could build a philosophy by borrowing a bit from one philosopher, a bit from another, or above the Scottish School, who never went beyond psychology ; and it was more than advisable to take into account all the positive facts and laws ascertained by modern science before endeavouring to lay down metaphysical principles : all this Littré, Comte and Taine did with much method, erudition, insight, and, one may even say, with genius. But it is no less true that to-day these philosophers appear not only belated but hurtful. They disbelieved all spiritual realities, and the result was that crude readers inferred materialism from their works. Thousands of so-called positivists of all degree denied the existence of the soul because Littré and Taine said that soul-phenomena were not scientifically ascertainable, or the existence of free-will because Taine had written that ' virtue and vice are products like sugar or vitriol ', an irrefutable statement when properly understood, but dangerously easy to misunderstand.

Renan also was a rarely gifted man, not only as a writer of terse graceful French, a thinker of agile if somewhat too flexible intelligence, but even as a scholar and an exponent of what used to be called in those days the Higher Criticism. But admirably equipped as he was, he had serious shortcomings which to-day make him appear strangely out of date. He thought that science could explain—and with respect to religious questions explain away—everything. He had an easy jaunty manner of treating Christianity and even Theism as poetic beliefs born of deep instincts of the human soul, which, fearlessly analysed, turned out to be only the mythical expression of these instincts; God was merely a convenient word, the resurrection of Christ was a legend created by love, and His divinity was the metaphysical translation of similar legends. All this sounded distinguished and final; and the result was that belief appeared uncritical and undeveloped. As a matter of fact it took years of reconsideration of the same questions to enable a man like Dr. Sanday, for instance, who knows a great deal more about Biblical criticism than was known in Renan's day, to be respected as a scholar though speaking as a believer. One had to be advanced or to be regarded as a fossil.

Some people would occasionally observe that these doctrines might be scientific but their immediate effect was morally depressing and even deteriorating. If it was not certain that there was a divine influence in the world or a spiritual substance in man, if there was no free-will and we were the playthings of fatality, what was the use of a great deal that had hitherto been held indispensable to good living and happy dying? Of this objection Taine disposed at once with the greatest ease: speculation and life were different things, as art and our every-

day avocations are different ; when the philosopher set about philosophizing his duty was to forget that there were people who might overhear his inward reflections. Philosophy was autonomous even if it was dispiriting, and its effects were mere contingencies.

This view had considerable vogue not only among scientists and *savants*, but even among literary people who claimed for art the rights which philosophy asserted for itself. The famous formula, *l'art pour l'art*, for which the Goncourt brothers were responsible, but which accounts admirably for the literary attitude of Flaubert, or Leconte de Lisle, was a translation of the same doctrine : the artist had every right to describe what he pleased, in any way he pleased, provided he did it artistically ; moral or immoral consequences were nothing to him. All this tended, as may easily be seen, to isolate thinkers and writers, and all those who thought themselves entitled to imitate them, from their time, country, and fellow beings in the sole company of what was declared to be Truth or Beauty. A perilous state of affairs, this, in which the supposed sages of a nation profess indifference to the interests of their country.

It is needless to say much about the advanced character of the works of George Sand, Dumas, and Baudelaire. The first two writers practically taught that passion is only accountable to itself and that the desires of man when they reach a certain intensity overrule the ordinary canons of morals ; the third was a morbid decadent who even now defies analysis. As to Hugo, Quinet, and Michelet, at the stage of their career which corresponds to the Second Empire, they were, above all, humanitarians who loved all mankind—with the exception of Catholics, whom they abhorred—and firmly believed in the prompt establishment of the United States of Europe.

The catastrophe of 1870, which showed to the French that the United States of Europe was a rather premature conception, and demonstrated that courage, self-denial, and the virtues without which a nation must go to ruin are inconsistent with materialism, ought to have brought about a revulsion of feeling and of thought. It did produce this result in a few eminent individuals; and until 1876 the country at large, owing to its Government, appeared to have gone back to sound principles. But after 1876 the outlook changed rapidly. The masses began to forget the formidable lesson they had received a few years before, and the newly elected representatives of the country were very different from their predecessors. Where the difference lay was not very difficult to see. Most of these men had been students in Paris during the Second Empire, and their intellectual background was generally that which I have described above. Their philosophers were Taine or Haeckel, their theologian was Renan; the novels they had read were those of George Sand, the plays they had applauded were those of Dumas; they had believed in the United States of Europe, and imagined that the establishment of the French Republic was a first step towards the pacification of the world. The consequence was that the advanced doctrines which, in 1865, were confined to books, were found ten years after to underlie the Government of the country and to be paramount in the formation of the public spirit.

An objection must rise in the mind of the English reader: is it possible that literature, which after all is only the solace of idle hours, should have so much influence on the trend of public affairs? and is it not a fact that numberless French people were to be found,

under the Second Empire and long after, whose intellectual preferences had never been tainted by these dangerous principles ?

It should be remembered that the French have a tendency hardly found in the other European nations, and seldom met with in England, to be carried away by their intellectual notions ; all their popular movements, all their Revolutions were made in accordance with theories recklessly acted upon. A great deal of the fascination which the French nation exercised, along with the dread it inspired in Europe during the twenty years which followed 1789, arose from this uncompromising enthusiasm about ideas and consequent propagandism.

On the other hand, it is a fact that many French people ignored or disliked the popular writers who are representative of the Second Empire ; they had conservative views in morals and often in religion, and many a foreigner must have been surprised at finding them so remote from the type he imagined. All this is true. But it is a law of history that a country is moulded by its Government, because most individuals are passive, and even when they are not so, do not easily discover the means of raising a protest ; the press is on the side of the majority, and makes it the more difficult for the dissenting few to express their feelings.

In fact it is impossible to contradict two statements concerning the historical development of France during the last forty years, which bear out the principles I have just recalled. In the first place, it is universally admitted that the eight or nine Chambers which succeeded one another since 1876 were advanced. Their philosophy was not only anti-clerical—that is to say, opposed to the

interference of churchmen in civil affairs where they have no business—but it was anti-catholic and even anti-christian. These Parliaments suppressed religious orders and confiscated their property, they denounced the Concordat with the Pope, sent back his ambassador, and finally confiscated the Church property, all which was anti-catholic. But they also favoured and occasionally enforced methods of education which regarded the mention of God in schools as a breach of 'neutrality'; in 1902 the Premier Combes was hooted down by his majority for saying that he believed in the soul, and he had to explain and practically apologize for his words. This, no doubt, showed a hostility to Christianity obviously born of the philosophy of Taine and Renan.

In the second place, it is also impossible to deny that many people scattered all over the world regarded France as a decaying nation, and Paris as a centre of corruption. Allusions to this belief were frequent in the press of most countries. How did this notion come to be spread about to that extent? It was owing largely, no doubt, to the existence in Paris of scandalous places of amusement, *which catered mostly for foreign visitors* but which were regarded as representative. There was certainly a considerable amount of injustice or exaggeration in the notion that France was mirrored in its capital, and Paris in its worst theatres. But on the other hand, it would be futile to gainsay that the great novelist of the years 1875 to 1895 was Zola, and the great novelist of the years 1890–1905 Anatole France; and the popularity of these two men was not likely to decrease the impression left by the licentiousness I have just spoken of.

Zola was a talented, industrious man, with a curious sense of literary responsibility united to a complete

absence of decency. His object, like that of the Realists before him, was to be true to life, and his ambition was to make his description of society so accurate that philosophical laws could be immediately deduced from it. Balzac, who towered above him as an artist, had cherished the same hope, and we do not feel that he succeeded. The laws of the moral world have been obscured rather than emphasized by dramatists and novelists ; and it was not until the nineteenth century that people went to them for the ethical guidance which they sadly need themselves. As a matter of fact, Zola, in spite of his philosophical pretensions, only produced a one-sided picture of the lowest society ; if one went by his thirty volumes it would seem as if there were only one class in France, and all the representatives of that class were vicious. But he was unequalled in his particular *genre*, and Anatole France could say with mock admiration that nobody had been able to heap up such a dunghill. The result of Zola's success was double : it confirmed the French in the outspokenness they frequently affect, and it convinced foreigners that a nation which they supposed to be represented by such a writer was in a very bad way.

Anatole France, whose success pushed Zola into the shade, is apparently very different from the latter. He is supremely exquisite, dainty, and light-handed, with dashes of cynicism which lend to his elegance something akin to force ; he has knowledge and intelligence, he is merciful to human weaknesses and full of pity for sorrow. But all these fascinating appearances do not prevent him from being fundamentally only another Zola. The brutes whom Zola depicted were automata submitted to the laws of a world in which physical instincts reign supreme ; but so are the flitting

figures which Anatole France's crayons sketch so deftly. Anatole France does not believe in goodness any more than Zola does. There is a great deal of suffering in his works, and suffering seems to be morally superior to selfishness; but the writer shows us all the time that this is nothing but a delusion and that people in anguish are as selfish as their luckier fellows. The scale of moral values is absent from this view of the world, and the absence gradually appeared with deplorable clearness in Anatole France: there are people, even in England—I might say especially in England at the present day—who will not have it said Anatole France has become a rather coarse Socialist, thinking no more of patriotism than of virtue, and making game of the principles without which nations as well as individuals can have no self-respect. But facts are facts, and if anybody wants to understand how Anatole France could, three months before the war, sign an anti-militarist poster which the Germans must have read with delight, let him refer to *The Island of the Penguins*.

That the same deterioration was visible in thousands of Anatole France's admirers is also a fact. Frenchmen, when they have nothing better to do, love the affectation of cynicism or scepticism which disports itself in their literature from the *fabliaux* to Renan, and fills the works of Rabelais and Voltaire. They long gave way to that propensity; and the serious-minded observer who casually saw them smile and joke about the past, present, and future of their history could hardly refrain from pronouncing the verdict: a decaying nation.

These, then, are the symptoms which struck the people whom I described at the beginning of this essay as unable to conceal their surprise at the energy displayed by France in her hour of trial.

We should now advert to the symptoms which led others, more sanguine or better-informed students of France, to the conviction that she was sound at heart.

First of all one ought to remember that a country cannot be judged exclusively, or even mainly, by its literature. Literature is not so artificial as the theatre, because its field is wider, but it is far, all the same, from being the adequate expression of a community. The fact is that the bulk of the French nation was ignorant of, or averse to, the philosophy implied in the literature which scandalized the rest of the world. Foreigners who happened to stay in Paris—to say nothing of less sophisticated towns—long enough to see with their own eyes frequently expressed their surprise at finding the French home so different from the descriptions of the novelists. It took more time or more penetration to satisfy oneself that the affectation of scepticism or cynicism common in certain circles was only an affectation which any opportunity for seriousness could dispel ; yet some people had a chance of coming to that certainty, and must have taken it as a matter of course when Zola came forward as a champion of morals, or more recently when Anatole France spoke up for patriotism : books were books and life was life—give a man a chance to rise above the dalliances of literature and he would be sure to act decently.

Still, literature is in one way a necessity. At a pinch a man will act on his impulses, and books will have but little share in his decisions ; but in more peaceful periods our intellect craves formulas, and according to the tendency visible in such formulas a country will, in its daily life, make for idealism or for materialism, for courage or for indulgence. If there had been no

traces between 1870 and the present day of what, in default of a better word, we must call a reaction, France might with good reason be called a decadent nation. But not only were such traces visible, they were dominant in the most important realms of human activity; and there is no exaggeration in saying that the characteristic of contemporary French thought is its strong reactionary tendency.

It is remarkable that two of the writers whom I pointed out above as representing the speculative recklessness of the Second Empire actually refuted their own theories. These two writers are no others than Taine and Renan, and it is useless to dwell on the importance of a change in such influential authors. I do not mean that Taine gave up his philosophy or Renan his criticism: a man seldom remodels his intellectual equipment after he is forty; but both Taine and Renan adopted after the war a completely different attitude towards life from that which they had shown before. Their conviction was that, being philosophers, their sole business was to philosophize, and that the consequences of their philosophy did not matter; if the conclusion of their speculations was that patriotism was a remnant of barbarism, let those who heard of that conclusion act as their conscience dictated. The double catastrophe of the defeat and the Commune staggered this security; the author of *L'Intelligence* and the author of *L'Avenir de la Science* had it brought home to them that, in spite of their long years of intellectual aloofness, they belonged to a community of men and not of pure spirits, and for the first time the civic instinct was awakened in them. The results are well known. Taine devoted the rest of his life to the eleven volumes of his *Origines de la France*

contemporaine, and Renan summed up his reflections on politics in *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale de la France*; and lo! these great works of the once advanced writers were not advanced at all; they were, on the contrary, resolutely conservative. Both historians showed the same distrust of vague aspirations as political motives and of democracy as a government. Both preferred the English habit of patching up to the French way of pulling down and rebuilding. Both regarded the Revolution as a failure, and modern demagogism as a form of cowardice. They stood for order, morals, and self-sacrifice as the basis of politics worth the name.

It is not exceptional to meet, even to-day, with people who, preferring the ideas of Taine and Renan in their first development to those which they afterwards advocated, resent any mention of the change I have just noticed. Such people, of course, do not count intellectually; had they come across Taine or Renan they would have promptly secured the contempt of two minds which never tried to get away from facts. But, unintelligent narrow-mindedness is not universal, and the readers of Taine's *Origines* and Renan's *Réforme* were deeply impressed. There is no doubt that the conservative tendency which has become more and more noticeable in favourite writers like Jules Lemaître, Faguet, Capus, Prévost, and hundreds of their imitators can be traced, if not to Taine's or Renan's evolution, at least to the altered attitude created by that evolution: literary people began to take an active interest in politics, and they paid more attention to tangible results than to theories, or, above all, to eloquent declamations. The hostility to the professional politician, which is a great feature of the

young generation, has come down to them from Taine and Renan in a direct line.

As I said above, Taine and Renan never reconsidered their philosophy. They went on believing that all phenomena, being reducible to material causes and effects, could be traced by science to their farthest origins. The consequence of this doctrine was double : first of all it was a denial of the necessity of faith, seeing that there were no mysteries, and furthermore it was a denial of God. So belief in science was associated with complete religious incredulity. Crude minds, which are always anxious to appear free from trammels, affected exceedingly scientific principles.

Experience alone would have been enough to explode the scientific fallacy : Pasteur said that the deeper he went, the more difficult the discovery of causes became ; and everybody must notice, as well as this great man, that the riddle of the universe was no nearer its solution in the nineteenth century than it was in the days of Aristotle. But the belief in science, which was a dogma with Taine, was denounced by men who were not Taine's inferiors either as *savants* or as philosophers. Only specialists know the names of M. Lachelier and M. Boutroux, but everybody knew the name of Brunetière, who went round proclaiming the 'bankruptcy of science', and most people who count came to hear of the famous mathematician Poincaré, and especially of the famous philosopher Bergson, who at the present moment is by far the most successful exponent of his speciality. And what is the gist of Bergson's teaching ? the very reverse of Taine's : it is the multiform affirmation that science is a mere construction of the intellect and that we have no guarantee of its accuracy ; it is, moreover, an affirmation that there is a spiritual element in man and in the

world for which physics or biology can never account. This of course provided a sufficient basis for religion : belief, in M. Bergson's philosophy, is an eminently scientific attitude. So is patriotism, for it is another great feature of Bergsonism that it has more respect for man's instincts than for his intelligence.

On the whole, we can say that French science and philosophy are no longer antagonistic to the idea of free-will, morals, and religion, and the rare champions of materialism seem curiously out of date.

Literature shows a transformation of the same kind. Towards 1880 Zola was the undisputed master of the novel, and Naturalism, i.e. a coarser form of Realism, was triumphant; but it was the end of its success. A young writer who could not be called a man of genius, but who was sensitive and capable of delicate intuitions, Paul Bourget, felt that the public had been surfeited with brutality, and that there was a chance for a kind of fiction which would make more room for the soul than for the body. His success was immediate and universal. In less than five years, Zola appeared not only indecent but inartistic, and, what is even more damning, false. People began to shrug their shoulders at a view of life which presented men and women as mere automata acting under animal impulses. Nobody questioned any more that, even in a self-indulgent society, instinct is not the universal law and that even the lowest types of humanity know doubts and struggles. This meant the restoration of the moral element, of respect for sacrifice and contempt for selfishness in literature. Bourget's characters were weak, but he knew it, and they themselves confessed it : this was enough to dispel the stifling atmosphere which Zola's school had gathered around life.

In the last thirty years realism has certainly not died out, and we ought to be grateful, for realism rightly understood means nothing else than the search after human verity; but the success of Bourget, Bazin, Bordeaux, more recently of E. Psichari and E. Clermont, in the novel, also the immense superiority of F. de Curel on the stage, show clearly that the French once more include manifestations of the soul in their notion of the real.

Anatole France had his share in Zola's defeat: the terse criticism of Zola's inspiration which I quoted above soon became a household word; but example is stronger than any criticism, and Anatole France's novels did more than his generally overpraised critical works to rid French literature of cumbersome Naturalism. This statement may seem at first sight to contradict what I said above of the essential similarity between the spirit of both Anatole France and Zola's novels, but it is only an appearance. With the average reader style counts less than matter, and to such a one *Le Lys rouge* may be more dangerous than *La Terre*; but with artists it is not so. Anatole France is a Materialist and a Socialist in his spirit, but in his manner he is a storyteller in the most charming French tradition, with a disdain for what the Romanticists and the Naturalists called force, but which was mostly bombast, and a partiality for clarity, elegance, gracefulness, wit, and generally the literary qualities which the world, not so long ago, regarded as eminently French. It was by these qualities, above all, that Anatole France became contagious; and the consequence was that the hundreds of young writers who in the last twenty years have more or less felt his influence or that of his own masters—Renan first and the French classics afterwards—are generally French,

not only in manner but in spirit, and impress us by an independence towards foreign sources of judgement or impression which is a highly conscious form of patriotism.

Conscious as it is, this patriotism is not always explicit: the writer thinks it superfluous to dwell on what he supposes the reader will feel. Yet there is a literary school of rare fascination which has made it its business to brace up the French public by the frank expression of a patriotism so resolute as to appear sometimes narrow. The name of Maurice Barrès is not universally known in England, but no name is so popular in France, and it is synonymous with a passionate love of the French soil and the French tradition. The story of Barrès' evolution has been frequently told, and can be summed up in a few words. Towards 1890, when Barrès, then a very young man, first made his mark, there was no question of regarding him as an apostle of anything except pleasure. But it was pleasure of a refined and almost exalted kind, the sensation of full self-realization much more than any other. A theory of life underlay this attitude, which Barrès was not long in developing. He knew that the highest pleasure for a man was the consciousness that he was himself, but the consciousness of being oneself, he, like everybody who has led a spiritual life, soon realized was associated with the environment in which each one of us has grown up: a man was the most himself in his own country, surrounded with familiar associations, and in the constant enjoyment of the sentimental or intellectual heritage left to him by his ancestors. This very simple observation is no novelty to a plain man brought up away from the sophistication of modern philosophy; but it struck the ultra-refined generation of Barrès as a discovery, and its development led to the extraordinary success,

first of all of literary Nationalism, but also of Nationalism without any reference to literature. Thousands of volumes in the past twenty years have expressed the joy of their authors at feeling themselves in community with the historic tradition of their country, and there are hardly any French works of this period in which the reflection of the same consciousness does not appear. As this kind of literature became more successful it also became freed of its original selfishness; and while we have seen it reach to the expression of self-sacrifice in the works of a grandson of Renan, Ernest Psichari, we have also seen it attain to the perfection of its effect, in the death of the same Psichari, killed on the battle-field at the beginning of the war, and in the life of admirable self-denial which Barrès himself has led of late years.

The reader must now see for himself what a gulf there is between the unreality of the humanitarianism preached by Michelet and the wide-awake attention of Nationalism to the destinies of France; between the sombre stoicism which Naturalism was at its best, or the cynicism it was at its worst, and the brave optimism of most contemporary writers. Bearing in mind the transformation I have just outlined, it is easy to understand how shocking any mention of France as a corrupt and decaying nation must have been to people who really knew what path the national genius had followed in the last thirty years. They realized that France was more French than she had been since the early days of Napoleon I, when militarism, yet in its glorious youth, had not become tyrannical, and they felt that only an occasion was lacking to reveal the wonderful rejuvenation.

The occasion, of course, was the war; but the war only

took by surprise the ignorant or the thoughtless. In 1905, in 1908, especially in 1911, the French nation had known the suspense which filled the last week of July 1914; and if in 1905 there had been more astonishment than fear at the prospect of an encounter with Germany, in 1908 and in 1911 there was neither astonishment nor nervousness. Anybody who knew the trend both of the better literature and of popular feeling must have realized that when the crisis came France would surely be equal to it. There was no likelihood of any differences between the soldier-workman and the soldier-writer of the Péguy or Psichari type. In fact both classes of men appear to be in perfect unanimity, not because of the overwhelming pressure of the circumstances, but because the war found them in possession of the best national characteristics, which are clear intelligence on one hand and cheerful decision on the other. It would be foolish to hope that this unbroken unity will persevere after the peace; the politicians who, at the Radical Convention of April 1914, almost on the eve of the war, insisted on reducing the French Army by a third, out of spite against President Poincaré even more than in accordance with pacifist theories, will not be shamed out of existence: we must expect to hear once more vague declamations as soon as pressing facts which demand prompt action can be pushed into the background; but professional politicians nowhere represent the populations they deceive, and French thought, in the plain conversation of the peasant as well as in the writings of the literary man, will be healthier than it was during six or seven generations.



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RUSSIA AND BRITAIN¹

THE other day I went to see a play, the scenes of which were set in many different countries. One of these, the bill announced, was to be in Russia: I whispered to my companion, 'That scene will be about a revolutionary who has been exiled to Siberia.' Of course it was. Our popular imaginative artists, eagerly searching for the picturesque, have picked up no other information about this huge nation, have taught their public nothing else. 'Tis not that these thrilling incidents are untrue. They have all happened over and over again; the best is true and the worst is true of the Russian Empire.

It is quite easy to make a fancy picture of Russia. It is also easy to make a fancy picture of England; and it has been done by Treitschke and his German disciples—with results as surprising now to the artists as to the sitter. All such portraits are made with facts, just as all pictures are made with colours; but the truth of your picture depends upon your insight and your sense of proportion. If a foreign writer selects extracts from the speeches of Sir Edward Carson, Michael Davitt, Mr. Bonar Law, and a member of the Shinn Fein, adds a few picturesque tragedies from Ireland, a few incidents from the lives of Clive and Warren Hastings, with an account of the firing of Sepoys from the cannon's mouth in the reign of Queen Victoria, and a few gruesome facts from the history of Newgate; and appends to

¹ Reprinted, by permission, from *The Nineteenth Century and After* of January, 1915.

this a description of what Florence Nightingale found in the Crimea (without mentioning Florence Nightingale), and an account of how we lost our American colonies, giving the whole an historical flavour by sketches of the characters of King John, Richard the Third, Henry the Eighth, Queen Mary, and Titus Oates : he may prove to the satisfaction of his hearers that our Empire was built up by crime, and is held by cowardly incompetence. Many Germans quite sincerely believe that this is a picture of England. They all believe in the picture they have made of Russia as a bloodstained Cossack : it was the bogey of ' Muscovite savagery ', of ' Oriental Slavic quasi-civilization '—or, to quote the Socialist and Pacificist *Volksstimme*, of ' Russian despotism ', ' Russian bestiality ', ' a merciless and barbaric enemy '—which closed their ranks at the beginning of the War ; and learned philosophers, exact scientists, and acute critics, like Eucken and Häckel and Harnack, wrote about ' Asiatic Barbarism ', as if this was a self-evident fact, a postulate common to them and to us. Yet Russia had never done England or Germany any harm ; its ' hordes ' had never descended upon Germany or upon us, though we had in the Crimean War, without any decent excuse and in the sole interest of the Antichrist of Stamboul, descended upon Russia ; it was indeed these same Muscovite hordes which had saved Germany from utter destruction at the hands of Napoleon ; had, in fact, emancipated her and made possible the formation of the German Empire.

Russia is one of the youngest brethren of the Christian family—almost as young as Prussia, which has had not nineteen but only six centuries of Christianity ; for she was held back by the Tatar domination (just when we were establishing our freedom upon the basis of Magna

Carta), and she was until modern times isolated from the West of Europe. Consequently she has had to cram an enormous amount of progress into the last century, and in certain ways is still a backward nation. It may with some truth be said that in Russia the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were all telescoped into the nineteenth ; and consequently things were done then by the Russian Government which we used to do in the Tudor period. Russia had much leeway to make up ; and, moreover, Russia is a country of extremes—externally of great distances and isolated satrapies, of extremes of heat and cold, which strongly affect the national character ; and spiritually it is a country of extreme opinions, and of swift changes. Even when he is an unbeliever, the Russian is a man of intense faith ; he transfers to his politics the same fervent receptiveness which he used to give to his religion. He is ever an idealist, and his politics *become* a religion. He wants to die for them. He is a ‘ whole hogger ’. In the West an extreme Socialist may sometimes seem to swallow Marx or Henry George intact ; but, unless he is young, he has some reservations : visions of compromise are at the back of his mind, a touch of half-acknowledged scepticism, a tendency to substitute evolution for revolution, a sense that *when* Utopia comes it will be somewhat different from the Utopias. In Russia it is much less so : the revolutionary is apt to be passionately idealistic, to swallow whole the creed he has got from the West : he is still ‘ Orthodox ’, still loyal to the death, and a martyr, with that strange Russian instinct for suffering, and that strange mixture of sanguine buoyancy and sudden despair ; he puts into his theory a faith which would surprise his Western teachers. Hence the horror which reactionaries of the Pobyedonóstseff stamp

had both of Liberalism and of the West. The mildest Western ideas became a flaming sword in the hands of the Russian student. And this intensified the contrary evils of Prussian bureaucratic methods, which have been fastened upon Russia since the days of Peter the Great : they have been bad enough in Prussia ; they have been worse in Russia, so sweeping in her thought, so casual in her action. Hence the clash of ideals ; hence the sins, negligences, and ignorances both of the Bureaucracy and its opponents.

The change of name from Petersburg to Petrograd—long desired by Pan-Slavists—is itself a sign that the evil of a Prussianized Russia is coming to an end ; the far greater change—also long desired—of the virtual headship of the Church from the Oberprokuror of the Holy Synod to a revived Patriarchate of Moscow (or perhaps of Constantinople), will, when it comes, carry the process infinitely farther ; for the Teutonic device by which Peter made the Church politically a department of his bureaucratic state has enchained the clergy and injured some of the deepest strongholds of religion. Indeed the qualities of Slav and Teuton do not mix well ; Treitschke and Nietzsche are themselves results of the mixture, as is much of the peculiar Prussian spirit, for the blood of the two races is intermingled throughout the patrimony of the Hohenzollerns. The German virtues as we see them in the Bavarian peasant, and the Russian virtues as we see them in the Russian peasant, are better kept distinct. As with blood, so with customs and ideas. Russia has drunk at the source of Prussian methods, and they have not suited her. She can never have the persistent industry or the bovine docility of her neighbours : the very rigours of her winter climate produce a capacity for doing nothing during long periods

which vitiates the methods of bureaucratic organization. It is indeed perfectly true that the first words a stranger learns in Russia are *Nichevó* and *Syeichass*, which, with *Pozháluista*, make him realize that he is with a people easy-going, dilatory, and polite. None of us have had dealings with Russia who have not learnt to make allowances for men who will put off answering urgent letters for weeks or for ever, and who are perfectly charming and enthusiastically active when we get to close quarters. The German is a great organizer, and a sober, weighty unit in the machinery which he devises so well. The Russian is the most unbusinesslike person in the civilized world ; his government is fitful, sometimes too cruel, often too kind, and generally too lax—laggard and tolerant for a generation, and then swiftly making a vast change that would take an Englishman centuries to effect. How long were we abolishing serfdom ? How much longer shall we be abolishing drunkenness ?

The real government of Russia has always been a government by intuition. The fatherland, to which the hearts of all Russians turn, is a family ; the Russia in which every Russian believes is that large, patient, communal soul which not even the Tatar domination could quell or change, which caused her people to cling together by an inveterate instinct of solidarity at times when rulers were not to be found and nobles were false. Ruled by Moslems, overrun by Poles, invaded again to the heart of the land by Swedes, struggling desperately with Turks, trampled by the Grande Armée till she sacrificed her gloriously beautiful Moscow to be free—this enduring brotherhood has never weakened, but has waxed in every desperate adversity, like an army that can go on fighting when all its leaders are killed, because

each man trusts and understands the other. The great poet Pushkin has described the spirit of his country :

By lasting out the strokes of fate,
In trials long they learned to feel
Their inborn strength—as hammer's weight
Will splinter glass but temper steel.

Russia is a family as no other nation is ; and the Tsar deserves his popular title of Little Father, because he is the head of a family : it is a title that certainly could not be applied to the Emperors who weld together twenty recalcitrant peoples in Germany and Austria ; but it could not be applied either, in the Russian sense, to any other ruler in the world. For this reason is Russian patriotism so indomitable and Russian loyalty so intense. Under difficulties, and amid privations, which we in the West can hardly imagine, the nation has grown from the obscure principality which Vladímir made Christian in the tenth century, to the remote unconsidered Muscovy which Shakespeare had heard talk of, to the vast coherent Empire of to-day, which still we know so little : and the texture is still the same throughout ; the people cling together and understand. Their quarrels are family quarrels, resounding and tragic ; but when an outsider tries to thrust his hand between the bark and the tree he learns something about Russian unity, and about a wider unity still, the unity of the Slav race, which, if it makes all Russians brothers, makes first cousins of all the Slavonic nations. The Russian Government could not have avoided helping Serbia, for the Russian people would not have allowed the Tsar to stand aside, and when the people choose they rule. The Russian Government can defy the ' *Intelligentsia* ', but it cannot overrule the people—not even to bring the *Kalendar* up to date. Every Russian

felt a responsibility for Serbia, because the Serbians are Slavs and are Orthodox. And even the Poles, Westernized as they were in the Middle Ages, and severed as they are by religion, have rallied to Russia. The world has rung with the wrongs of Russian Poland, for the Poles are a brilliant and eloquent people ; but when the War broke out the Polish members of the Duma did not hesitate for a moment. The quarrels of the past had been terrible ; but they were family quarrels after all. The Pole has hated the Russian bureaucracy, and no wonder ; but he hates the Prussian, man for man, with a continual vigour that must be seen to be realized. He remembers, too, that the crime of the partition of Poland was done by three Germans : Frederick the Great, Maria Teresa, and Katharine of Russia. Perhaps he remembers in justice, too, that before this it was Russia herself that had been carved by Poland, and that in the first partition she won back the White Russians, who were her own people. But, if the rally of Poland is a wonderful thing, the rally of Russian revolutionaries is still more significant. Exiles come back and give themselves up to arrest, in order that they may be allowed to fight in the Army. Advanced Liberals write to explain that all their cherished ideals are bound up with the future of Russia and her present success. They believe in their political faith, and yet, and yet—they believe in Russia more, and something within tells them that all will be well if Russia triumphs.

They are right. The future of the world lies in the accomplishment of brotherhood. And the future of the world lies in the peasantry ; and the real, enduring Russia is the Russia, not of the Intelligentsia, but of the peasant—that unspoilt child of nature and religion, simple, brave, faithful, loyal, and most marvellously

strong and patient. Foreigners speak of Russian barbarism, and it is the peasant they have in their minds. Russians speak of the evils of Western corruption, and they too are thinking of the peasant: they see how badly Russia has suffered, in methods, in morals, in religion, since Peter 'opened a window to the West'. The gains they recognize also, and the necessity of competence in modern sciences and arts; but they see in the aristocracy, in the commercial class, in the *Intelligentsia*, in the industrials of the towns, abundant signs that Western influences may rot rather than ripen the Russian character. The Russian peasant, they feel, so long as he remains on the land, preserves the national character in its strength and purity; he changes rapidly for the worse, they say, in the industrial centres, just as we are told the Irish peasant loses some of his beautiful unworldly qualities when he emigrates to America. But the peasant *is* Russia, overwhelmingly he is Russia; and the other classes are but as the clothes and ornaments on a man. The peasant needs more education, like the rest of us; but if he can be kept free to develop on his own lines, and to lose nothing of his ancient virtues in the onward march, then it will be well with Russia, and she will contribute to the civilization of the future quite as much as she borrows. The conviction of the ablest Russian Liberals that their country has an immense civilizing mission in Europe as well as in Asia—and that the true democratic ideal cannot be established without her—is based upon this faith in the peasant. Tolstoy personifies the idea. He stands before the world in peasant garb, as one who has turned his back upon the gilded saloons of Petersburg (it was Petersburg then) to live on the land, to speak the thoughts and to use the well of Russian undefiled which is the language of the

peasantry. And he finds the summary of his peasant ideal in the Gospel: Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

'Russian barbarism,' say the Germans; and their dread of it has plunged Europe in war. Many of our own people have said the same thing—I noticed that even Mr. Wells has occasionally fallen into the habit in his most able book about the crisis; while the little band of Liberals, who are telling us in a series of tracts how to avoid war for ever, continually press the accusation upon their English readers, and are thereby unwittingly sowing the seeds of another war; for this is the way that wars are made—the dragon's teeth are sown long before, and fear, hatred, and contempt accumulate till they can be contained no more, and the word goes out to kill. Now, what these denunciators all have in their minds when they speak of barbarism must be the Russian peasant; for no one in his senses could use the phrase of the brilliant and cultivated educated classes; to compare the education of the English middle class, for instance, with that of Russia would be, as Mr. Maurice Baring says, 'merely silly'. No, the Englishman who can speak no language but his own has at least learnt to respect the Russians as linguists. But the peasant? He is still largely illiterate—some 80 per cent. of the population in Russia, and about 40 per cent. (a significant drop) among the Russian colonists of Siberia; he is different from our peasantry in appearance, for he looks like a real peasant and does not wear the townsmen's shabby clothes; and he is poor. He is really proud of being a peasant. Would that we could say the same of England! And he has the thoughtful, retentive mind of the man who has not been spoilt by cheap

reading. 'I belong to the shallow Intelligentsia,' said in all complacency one of Mr. Stephen Graham's half-Westernized Russians ; and of how many in the West would this be true also ! The Russian peasant is not shallow. He is full of natural poetry, his talk is shrewd and humorous, and he is observant and reflective as well as good-natured and sociable ; lazy and slow he often is, but wonderfully clever with his hands, and also unalterably stubborn. Like the Irish peasant, he has a mind steeped in folk-lore, folk-song, and religion. Some inquiring person instituted a census as to the favourite books in certain Russian village libraries. No one would ever guess the favourite work which these uncultured peasants read to one another. It was a translation of Milton's *Paradise Lost* ! I have mentioned Tolstoy, whose estimate of the peasantry would deserve consideration even if it were not also that of most Russian writers. His peculiar literary excellence in the eyes of his fellow countrymen is that he writes in such beautiful Russian, and the language he habitually uses is the simple speech of the peasants. There are no dialects in Russia ; there is nothing like the Cockney accent. The peasant speaks like a gentleman.

Above all things, he is religious. We are apt, when people are not religious, in our funny way, to call them superstitious, and so to dispose of them. And Russia we are apt to judge by her picturesque and moving acts of devotion—calling them superstitious if we think that beauty is a superstition. The outward religion of Russia is indeed wonderful and touching ! it is so universal, in all places and among all classes, so free from Western threadbare chilliness—for indeed it is Oriental in its freedom from self-consciousness, in its simple fervour. A Western cannot but be immensely

struck when he sees a general in uniform bowing at a wayside shrine, a policeman saying his prayers aloud in the snow, a fat merchant in astrakhan crossing himself with his cigar before an ikon in a crowded railway station. Devotion is poured out fervently at all times and in all places. And this gives the whole country an aspect of immanent Christianity, and we feel that it has a right to the title of *Svyatáya Russ*, 'Holy Russia'—more perhaps than we to that of 'Merrie England'. If Christ were to come through the streets of London to-day, comforting and healing people, we know that all our ways would have to be suddenly transformed. In Russia there would be no change—I had almost said no surprise. Indeed, underneath the gorgeous and elaborate rites of the Eastern Church, which impress an Englishman and puzzle him, Russian religion is singularly evangelical. The Russian Church has many faults of organization, and a wise reform will soon be a matter of terrible urgency; her clergy need a higher standard of education—they need, I think, a full and true intercourse with our English clergy, for the advantage of us all; but the Russian Church is the Church of the people, as is no Church of Western Christendom (except perhaps in some parts of Ireland, for here again the geographical extremes of Europe meet); she belongs to the people and the people belong to her; and the common faith is Gospel Christianity—in many ways more evangelical than anything we have in the West. We often say here that the Sermon on the Mount is impracticable. It is not impracticable in Russia. The spirit of it comes naturally to the peasants, the *Krestianye*; ¹ they have learned through a long

¹ A Christian in Russian is *Christiánin*, a peasant *Krestyanin*, from *Krest*, the cross; *Muzhik* is a more familiar expression.

endurance lessons which may one day work as a leaven throughout Christendom. I think, if Christ came down to earth to-day, He would gather the peasants of Russia together, and say over them the Beatitudes.

If the future of the world lies in the men of the soil, if it lies in the spread of brotherhood, if it lies in religion, as the past has lain, then Russia has great and precious treasures to bring to the building of the new age. She has many faults—there is something mediaeval in the sharp mixture of violent sins and violent virtues, of unworthy acts and ecstasies of worship; her peasants are not saints, though they are the stuff from which saints are often made—their character has been marred by drunkenness and its resultant crimes; her Government has been guilty of base blunders, of cruel and foolish policies of repression, her statesmen have sometimes run after wild and aggressive ambitions; acts of mediaeval savagery are nearer in her history than in ours. All Europe has heard of the Tatar in the Russian character. All Europe has heard of the worst in Russia—of the knout, of serfdom, of exile to Siberia, of pogroms, secret police, a persecuted Press, and military executions. Her vivid mixture of black and white is very unlike our Western greyness. But much of the black has gone already: the knout and the clanking of exiles' chains, so dear to melodrama, have gone, and serfdom has been long abolished; drunkenness has even now been swept away, and we here in our shame look with envy at the nation which has purged itself—with a great price has obtained this freedom. That is so like Russia! We pity her faults; and, lo! with a bound she has passed far ahead of us, and it is we who are still wallowing in our Occidental barbarism. Now every Russian is confident about the future because he knows that his nation has

this wonderful vitality in reform. The evils which we think peculiarly Russian he attributes to foreign influences; he remembers that few of her leading statesmen in the nineteenth century were of Russian birth, that the chief Foreign Minister from the time of Napoleon to the Crimean War could not even speak the Russian language; he thinks of his country as the champion of Christendom against the Turk and his atrocities—alas! that England opposed her in her work—as the protector of free Montenegro, the liberator of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Roumania, of half Armenia—and now of all Armenia. He knows that the secret police are a temporary body whose crimes are a disgrace and whose days are numbered; the ordinary police are as kindly as our own. He attributes the persecutions in his country to the officials of the past—to a system that was not Russian, trying to defend itself against very dangerous doctrines, and driven to repression as our own Liberal Government was driven by the far milder excesses of the militants here. He admits that his country is behind ours in political freedom; but he is confident. The Duma, for all its disabilities, is very much alive; the electoral system is indeed deliberately undemocratic, but not worse than the three-class system of Prussia; and the freedom of the executive from parliamentary control is only another Prussian fault. Henceforward the influence will be that of England and France alone, and there will be no *Dreikaiserbund*. The Duma has secured the principle, and practice will not follow on so slowly as it has often done in Russia; the peasant has the instinct of self-government, long traditions in the village communism of the Mir, and much practice in the more modern Zemstvo. Russians often speak of their country as the most democratic in Europe,

and socially this is true. In social freedom, too, a Russian will insist that he is ahead of us—that people live their own life, that there is no tyranny of public opinion as with us, that the woman's movement is more advanced than in England, and far more than in France or Germany.

He will perhaps ask us whether it is really true that we have a dramatic censor who forbids the production of Maeterlinck's *Monna Vanna*. There is a saying that in Russia everything is forbidden but everything is done: an enormous list of rules hangs in the railway stations, but no one has ever read them. Russia is very tender, very lenient—too lenient in some ways. Many terrible things have happened in Siberia; but yet it is true that prisoners were generally released when they arrived there; and now that transportation is in principle abolished, Russian criminals must regret that they have to put up with the monotonous certitude of a convict prison—though even the prisons, as Mr. Bernard Pares describes them, are pleasant places compared with the solitary horror of our British cells. We used to think of Russia as a country of torture and death; and yet Russia is ahead of us in having no capital punishment—except when martial law is proclaimed, as too often has been the case. The story of Dostoyévsky's famous novel *Crime and Punishment* would be impossible in England, for the neurotic student who is its hero would with us have been summarily hanged for his very bad case of murder; as it is, he gets a few years in Siberia, is converted by the devotion of a woman who had been driven on the streets and follows him to exile, and the story ends with a vista of their living happily ever after. It is a Christian story of redemption, and not a pagan story of judicial vengeance; and it expresses

the true Russia—as indeed does not only Dostoyévsky, but the great company of Russian writers in their deep and most Christlike compassion for the suffering, the sinful, the outcast, and the poor.

It is always an impertinence to attempt the description of another nation, and the more so when the writer has no special qualifications for the work. But war-time, for all its horrors, is a time for making national friendships ; and we must all help in the great opportunity of cementing by respect and affection the alliance between two nations which lie so far apart and yet have so much in common. One cannot hope to do justice to the task ; and yet the ignorance of Russia among Englishmen is so great—far greater than their ignorance of us—that even the humblest must help to educate. And certain facts need emphasizing. No Englishman has been in Russia without liking the Russians : he finds himself among a people eager, friendly, clever, simple, expansive ; he is in the East, but it is an East which has drunk deep of the spirit of Christ. He has passed into a fraternity, where you exchange confidences with your neighbour, where you call the cab-driver ‘ my dove ’ and the porter ‘ brother ’—where the coachman kisses his master and mistress at Easter and says ‘ He is risen indeed ’—where for good and evil all are a family together, and if one member suffers all the members suffer with it. He sees faults too, rather naïvely displayed and too easily condoned—much corruption in some classes, as of a nation whose blood is less immune than ours against infection. But he is drawn to the heart of this people, and when he is away he longs to be back—back into what an eminent Englishman described to me as the atmosphere of kindness and freedom which he feels as he crosses

the frontier—back into the busy varied life of a versatile people, full of character, full of vitality, a youthful nation gathered round old-world Byzantine churches.

And if we English are wise, we shall be quick to appreciate and slow to judge, since it is difficult for us to do justice to a race so different from the Latin, Teuton, or Briton as is the great Slav family. The Germans fail utterly to understand the Slavs—Poles and Russians alike hate the Teuton, and are hated with a Central-European intensity. We English have not succeeded in understanding the Russian people—through the thousand leagues that separate us we have seen a grim, unkempt, bent figure wading through the snow in clanking chains. . . . When the War began our newspapers invented the phrase ‘the Russian steam-roller’: they were so pleased with it that the public were bored to death with the constant repetition. Well, recent events in the East have shown that it would be more exact to speak of the Russian *corps de ballet*—for surely troops never before have shown such agility and *élan*. Yet both phrases are significant of the Slav character, which we find it so difficult to understand. It has the strength and patience with which the steam-roller is gifted; it has also the verve, the quickness, the light fancy of the dancer. The Slavs in fact are, as London has learnt with some surprise, the greatest dancers of the world, and not at all like the Esquimaux. It is a mixture that we are not familiar with: the dash, and heat, and vitality are in the blood; perhaps the endurance is due to the winter hardships—the patience to religion, and the sombre courage to the immense difficulties of Russia’s history—difficulties to which, as Mr. Pares says, she has always been only just a little more than equal. The small nation which is now become so great won it

strength under the hammer of foreign oppression ; she crawled out of the welter of savage tribes that surrounded her by virtue of the Christian faith that was in her ; she drew herself up and rolled away the oppression of the Yellow Horde of Islam, and freed herself from Pole and Swede by virtue of that family instinct, both racial and religious, which held her people together and preserved her integrity in the darkest hours. ' It was ', says the same high authority, whose *Russia and Reform* should be read side by side with Sir D. Mackenzie Wallace's standard work on Russia and Mr. Stephen Graham's penetrating sketches of Russian psychology, ' it was the constant, versatile, inexhaustible vitality of the people, always fresh in fancy, but always broken to patience, that made success possible. It is this varied mass of humour, good-hearted patience, and quaint resource which has given the body to Russian history.' And he speaks of the instinct for order, the faith in Christianity and championship of it, and the life and labour of the people, as the three great principles that have made Russian history.

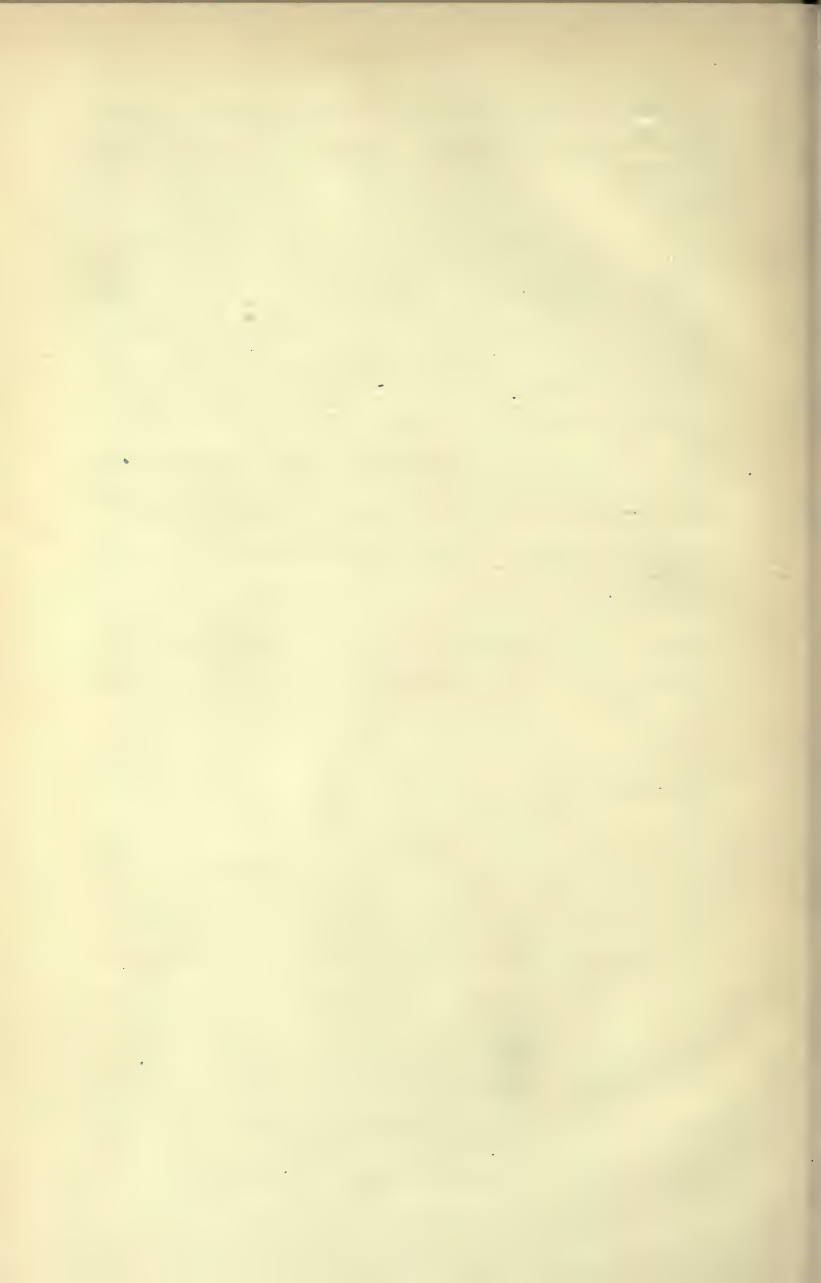
Of the literature, the art, and the scientific work of Russia I have not the room to speak. It is strange that Germans should think her barbarous, when during the last fifty years she has taken the place in world-literature which Germany had held for fifty years before. In spite of the immense difficulties of her language, which make her poetry a sealed book to the West, her prose writers are now coming by their own—at least the supremacy of Turghényeff, Dostoyévsky, and Tolstoy is recognized, and the translators are ever more busy with her writers. Great as has been the service of Germany in quarrying out knowledge for the world, it is three other nations whose modern creative writers

are now translated into all the languages of Europe—Britain, France, and Russia ; and the Russians, be it said, know our literature far better than we know theirs. In music Russia alone threatens the high supremacy of Germany ; in the other arts she is vigorous and accomplished ; in science she has given us Mendeléyeff and Metchnikoff. She has the powers of a great and civilizing people.

And Russia is immense : the Slavs, so long oppressed that they gave to Mediaeval Europe the word for slavery, have come by their own, and a vast future is unrolled before them. From the Adriatic to the Sea of Japan, from the Arctic Ocean to the Aegean and the deserts of Central Asia, the Slav race extends—under the shadow of the Orthodox Church ; and after this War none will be again under Teutonic or under Turkish domination. The Slav race is the most prolific in the world : already the hundred and seventy millions of the Russian Empire form a nation larger than Great Britain and France, Italy and Spain, the Netherlands and Scandinavia put together ; this population increases by three millions every year—three-quarters of the population of Scotland ; within the next generation, now that strong measures are being taken to deal with her terrible infant mortality, she can hardly be less than two hundred and fifty millions ; within the century her numbers will probably be doubled. We can hardly imagine what this will mean to the world, and what it will mean to Christendom, if Russia avoids a religious *débâcle* and the Eastern Church attains a vastness of unity unparalleled in the history of the Christian faith. The Russian Empire, with material resources in Siberia, in Central Asia, and in the old country, comparable to those of America, with a complete equipment of education, with the old

indomitable spirit still at her heart, and her internal agonies long past—what a prospect is spread before her children of to-day ! Can we wonder at their confidence ?

This great nation is now our ally. The old blind jealousies are gone ; our people are beginning to understand one another, our Churches are making friends ; our Empires, when the War is over, will be rounded off, and we shall not be tempted to aggression, but shall have before us the task of civilization and consolidation, and our common work in Asia. The two races are very different, but strangely complementary, and in Russia the value of English influences is realized ; her nascent constitutionalism looks to ours as its mother and its model, her people admire our characteristics and read our literature, her most carefully trained children are put into English hands and taught our language and our ways. We have something in our spirit that Russia needs. And she has something that will be good for us.





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RUMANIA
HER HISTORY AND POLITICS

BY

D. MITRANY

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RUMANIA :

HER HISTORY AND POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

THE problem of the origin and formation of the Rumanian nation has always provided matter for keen disputation among historians, and the theories which have been advanced are widely divergent. Some of these discussions have been undertaken solely for political reasons, in which cases existing data prove conveniently adaptable. This elastic treatment of the historical data is facilitated by the fact that a long and most important period affecting the formation and the development of the Rumanian nation (270-1220) has bequeathed practically no contemporary evidence. By linking up, however, what is known antecedent to that period with the precise data available regarding the years following it, and by checking the inferred results with what little evidence exists respecting the obscure epoch of Rumanian history, it has been possible to reconstruct, almost to a certainty, the evolution of the Rumanians during the Middle Ages.

A discussion of the varying theories would be out of proportion with, and out of place in, this pamphlet. Nor is it possible to give to any extent a detailed description of the epic struggle which the Rumanians carried on for centuries against the Turks. We shall have to

deal, therefore, on broad lines with the historical facts—laying greater stress only upon the three fundamental epochs of Rumanian history: the formation of the Rumanian nation, its initial casting into a national polity (foundation of the Rumanian principalities), and its final evolution into the actual unitary State, and we shall then pass on to consider Rumania's present attitude.

FORMATION OF THE RUMANIAN NATION

About the fifth century B.C., when the population of the Balkan-Carpathian region consisted of various tribes belonging to the Indo-European family, the northern portion of the Balkan Peninsula was conquered by the Thracians and the Illyrians. The Thracians spread north and south, and a branch of their race, the Dacians, crossed the Danube. The latter established themselves on both sides of the Carpathian ranges, in the region which now comprises the provinces of Oltenia (Rumania), Banat, and Transylvania (Hungary). The Dacian empire expanded till its boundaries touched upon those of the Roman Empire. The Roman province of Moesia (between the Danube and the Balkans) fell before its armies, and the campaign that ensued was so successful that the Dacians were able to compel Rome to an alliance.

Two expeditions undertaken against Dacia by the Emperor Trajan (98–117) released Rome from these ignominious obligations, and brought Dacia under Roman rule (A.D. 106). Before his second expedition, Trajan threw over the Danube a stone bridge, the remains of which can still be seen at Turnu-Severin, a short distance below the point where the Danube enters Rumanian territory. Trajan celebrated his

victory by erecting at Adam Klissi (in the province of Dobrudja) the recently discovered *Tropaeum Trajani*, and in Rome the celebrated 'Trajan's Column', depicting in marble reliefs various episodes of the Dacian wars.

The new Roman province was limited to the regions originally inhabited by the Dacians, and a strong garrison, estimated by historians at 25,000 men, was left to guard it. Numerous colonists from all parts of the Roman Empire were brought here as settlers, and what remained of the Dacian population completely amalgamated with them. The new province quickly developed under the impulse of Roman civilization, of which numerous inscriptions and other archaeological remains are evidence. It soon became one of the most flourishing dependencies of the Roman Empire, and was often spoken of as *Dacia Felix*.

About a century and a half later hordes of barbarian invaders, coming from the north and east, began to sweep over the country. Under the strain of these incursions the Roman legions withdrew by degrees into Moesia, and in A.D. 271 Dacia was finally evacuated. But the colonists remained. Only a nomad population would retreat before an invading enemy; a settled population would give way and submit to the conquerors, or take refuge in the neighbouring woods and mountains until the danger had passed. This was the case with the Daco-Roman population, who retired into the Carpathians, and lived there forgotten of history.

The most powerful of these invaders were the Goths (271-375), who, coming from the shores of the Baltic, had shortly before settled north of the Black Sea. Not being accustomed to mountain life, they occupied

only the plains between the Carpathians and the Dnjester. They had consequently but little intercourse with the Daco-Roman population, and the total absence, in the Rumanian language and in Rumanian place-names, of words of Gothic origin, indicates that their stay had no influence upon country or population. Material evidence of their occupation is afforded, however, by a number of articles made of gold found in 1837 at Petroasa (Moldavia), and now in the National Museum at Bucarest.

After the Goths came the Huns (375-453) under Attila, the Avars (566-799), both of Mongolian race, and the Gepidae (453-566) of Gothic race, all savage, bloodthirsty raiders, passing and re-passing over the Rumanian regions, pillaging and burning everything on their way. To avoid destruction, the Daco-Roman population withdrew more and more into the inaccessible wooded regions of the mountains, and as a result were in no wise influenced by contact with the invaders.

But with the coming of the Slavs, who settled in the Balkan Peninsula about the beginning of the seventh century, certain fundamental changes took place in the ethnical conditions prevailing on the Danube. The Rumanians were separated from the Romans, following the occupation of the Roman provinces between the Adriatic and the Black Sea by the Slavs, such part of the population as was not annihilated during the raids of the Avars being taken into captivity, or compelled to retire southwards towards modern Macedonia, and northwards towards the Dacian regions.

Parts of the Rumanian country became dependent upon the new State, founded between the Balkans and the Danube in 679 by the Bulgarians, a people of

Turanian origin, who formerly inhabited the regions north of the Black Sea between the Volga and the mouth of the Danube.

After the conversion of the Bulgarians to Christianity (864) the Slovenian language was introduced into their Church, and afterwards also into the Church of the already politically dependent Rumanian provinces.¹ This finally severed the Daco-Rumanians from the Latin world. The former remained for a long time under Slav influence, the extent of which is shown by the large number of words of Slav origin contained in the Rumanian language, especially in geographical and agricultural terminology.

The coming of the Hungarians (a people of Mongolian race), about the end of the ninth century, put an end to the Bulgarian domination in Dacia. While a few of the existing Rumanian duchies were subdued by Stephen the Saint, the first King of Hungary (995–1038), the ‘land of the Wlachs’ (*Terra Blacorum*), in the south-eastern part of Transylvania, enjoyed under the Hungarian kings a certain degree of national autonomy. The Hungarian chroniclers speak of the Wlachs as ‘former colonists of the Romans’. The ethnological influence of the Hungarians upon the Rumanian population has been practically nil. They found the Rumanian nation firmly established, race and language, and the latter remained pure of Magyarisms, even in Transylvania. Indeed, it is easy to prove—and it is only what might

¹ The Rumanians south and north of the Danube embraced the Christian faith after its introduction into the Roman Empire by Constantine the Great (325), with Latin as religious language and their church organization under the rule of Rome. A Christian basilica, dating from that period, has been discovered by the Rumanian archaeologist Tocilescu at Adam Klissi (Dobrudja).

be expected, seeing that the Rumanians had attained a higher state of civilization than the Hungarian invaders—that the Hungarians were largely influenced by the Daco-Romans. They adopted Latin as their official language, they copied many of the institutions and customs of the Rumanians, and recruited a large number of their nobles from among the Rumanian nobility, which was already established on a feudal basis when the Hungarians arrived.

A great number of the Rumanian nobles and freemen were, however, inimical to the new masters, and migrated to the regions across the mountains. This the Hungarians used as a pretext for bringing parts of Rumania under their domination, and they were only prevented from further extending it by the coming of the Tartars (1241), the last people of Mongolian origin to harry these regions. The Hungarians maintained themselves, however, in the parts which they had already occupied until the latter were united into the principality of the 'Rumanian Land'

To sum up: 'The Rumanians are living to-day where fifteen centuries ago their ancestors were living. The possession of the regions on the Lower Danube passed from one nation to another, but none has endangered the Rumanian nation as a national entity. "The water passes, the stones remain"; the hordes of the migration period, detached from their native soil, disappeared as mist before the sun. But the native Roman element bent their heads while the storm passed over them, clinging to the old places until the advent of happier days, when they were able to stand up and stretch their limbs.'¹

¹ Traugott Tamm, *Über den Ursprung der Rumänen*, Bonn, 1891.

THE FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE RUMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES

The first attempt to organize itself into a political entity was made by the Rumanian nation in the thirteenth century, when, under the impulse of the disaffected nobles coming from Hungary, the two principalities of 'Muntenia' (Mountain Land), commonly known as Wallachia and 'Moldavia', came into being. The existence of Rumanians on both sides of the Carpathians long before Wallachia was founded is corroborated by many contemporary chroniclers. We find evidence of it in as distant a source as the *History of the Mongols* of the Persian chronicler, Rashid Al-Din, who, describing the invasion of the Tartars, says: 'In the middle of spring (1240) the princes (Mongols or Tartars) crossed the mountains in order to enter the country of the Bulares (Bulgarians) and of the Bashguirds (Hungarians). Orda, who was marching to the right, passed through the country of the Ilaute (Olt), where Bazarambam met him with an army, but was beaten. Boudgek crossed the mountains to enter the Kara-Ulak, and defeated the Ulak (Wlach) people.'¹ Kara Ulak means Black Wallachia; Bazarambam is certainly the corrupted name of the Ban Bassarab, who ruled as vassal of Hungary over the province of Oltenia, and whose dynasty founded the Principality of Wallachia. The early history of this principality was marked by efforts to free it from Hungarian domination, a natural development of the desire for emancipation, which impelled the Rumanians to migrate from the subdued provinces in Hungary.

The foundation of Moldavia dates from after the

¹ Xenopol, *Histoire des Roumains*, Paris, 1896, i. 168.

retreat of the Tartars, who had occupied the country for a century (1241–1345). They were driven out by an expedition organized by the King of Hungary, in which the Rumanians from the province of Maramuresh also took part. It was the latter who then founded the Principality of Moldavia under the suzerainty of Hungary, the chroniclers mentioning as its first ruler the Voivod Dragosh.¹

The rudimentary political formations which already existed before the foundation of the principalities were swept away by the invasion of the Tartars, who destroyed all trace of constituted authority in the plains below the Carpathians. In consequence the immigrants from Transylvania did not encounter any resistance, and were even able to impose obedience upon the native population, though coming rather as refugees than as conquerors. These newcomers were mostly nobles (*boyards*). Their emigration deprived the masses of the Rumanian population of Transylvania of all moral and political support—especially as a part of the nobility had already been won over by their Hungarian masters—and with time the masses fell into servitude. On the other hand the immigrating nobles strengthened and secured the predominance of their class in the States which were to be founded. In both cases the situation of the peasantry became worse,

¹ The legend as to the foundation of Moldavia tells us that Dragosh, when hunting one day in the mountains, was pursuing a bison through the dense forest. Towards sunset, just when a successful shot from his bow had struck and killed the animal, he emerged at a point from which the whole panorama of Moldavia was unfolding before his astonished eyes. Deeply moved by the beauty of this fair country, he resolved to found a State there. It is in commemoration of this event that Moldavia bears the head of a wild bison in her coat of arms.

and we have curiously enough the same social fact brought about by apparently contrary causes.

Though the Rumanians seem to have contributed but little, up to the nineteenth century, to the advance of civilization, their part in European history is nevertheless a glorious one, and if less apparent, perhaps of more fundamental importance. By shedding their blood in the struggle against the Ottoman invasion, they, together with the other peoples of Oriental Europe, procured that security which alone made possible the development of western civilization. Their merit, like that of all with whom they fought, 'is not to have vanquished time and again the followers of Mohammed who always ended by gaining the upper hand, but rather to have resisted with unparalleled energy, perseverance, and bravery the terrible Ottoman invaders, making them pay for each step advanced such a heavy price, that their resources were drained, they were unable to carry on the fight, and thus their power came to an end'.¹

From the phalanx of Christian warriors stand out the names of a few who were the bravest of a time when bravery was common.

Mircea the Old, Prince of Wallachia, led the Rumanians in the battle of Kossovo, in 1389, when the united Balkan nations attempted for the first time to check the Ottoman invasion. The battle was lost, and Mircea had to consent to the payment of a tribute to the Turks. Nor were they more fortunate at Nicopoli, in 1395, where they fought with the army of Sigismond, King of Hungary, and were aided by a strong contingent of French cavaliers sent by Charles VI, King of France. Shortly afterwards, however, the Turks having invaded Wallachia, Mircea utterly defeated them at Rovine.

¹ Xenopol, *op. cit.*, i. 266.

For a short time the country had peace, until it was again subdued by the Sultan Mohammed. In 1411 Wallachia had to submit once more to the payment of an annual tribute; but the country was otherwise kept free from any Turkish interference, and it was on this basis that the relations between Turkey and Rumania rested up to 1877.

After Mircea's death internal struggles for the throne racked Wallachia for nearly half a century. Some of the claimants having sought the assistance of the Turks in this strife, the latter made use of the circumstance by imposing upon Wallachia a yearly tribute of five hundred children for the corps of the Janissaries.

To do away with this obligation was the first thought of *Vlad the Impaler* (1458-62) when he acceded to the throne. Torn between the Ottoman oppression from without, and the moral corruption of his country from within, one may understand, and perhaps excuse the means of which this prince availed himself, impaling without hesitation all whom he suspected. But he was as fair in his judgements as he was cruel in his punishments. Vlad having impaled 2,000 Turks, sent to seize him by stratagem, Mohammed II himself led a punitive expedition against the Wallachian prince. Vlad projected no less a deed than the murder of the Sultan in his own tent. Speaking Turkish perfectly, he entered the Turkish camp at night with a few hundred of his men in disguise, penetrated to the tent in which he expected to find the Sultan, and killed the sentries and the Pasha he found there. The Turks, attributing the deed to some of their own soldiers, began a promiscuous massacre amongst themselves, which only ended at dawn. Vlad and his men, profiting by the confusion into which the Turks were thrown, crushed the Sultan's army completely,

An unfortunate feud, however, against the Prince of Moldavia, Stephen the Great, soon put an end to the reign of Vlad.

A period of the most lamentable decadence followed. During an interval of twenty-five years (1521-46) no less than eleven princes succeeded one another on the throne of Wallachia, whilst of the nineteen princes who ruled during the last three-quarters of the sixteenth century, only two died a natural death while still reigning. The Turkish domination prevailed more and more in the country. But it is worthy of note that even at the lowest ebb of their fortune, the Rumanian provinces never became what Hungary was for a century and a half, a Turkish province.

In Moldavia also internal struggles were weakening the country. Not being powerful enough to do away with one another, the various aspirants to the throne contented themselves with occupying and ruling over parts of the province. Between 1443-7 there were no less than three princes reigning simultaneously, whilst one of them, Peter III, lost and regained the throne three times.

But it was as if the country reawakened with the accession of *Stephen the Great* (1457-1504) to the throne of Moldavia. It was this prince who dealt the most serious blows to the Ottoman power. For forty-seven years he defended his country against innumerable enemies and, dying, he left Moldavia independent. Far spread the fame of his exploits. The Shah of Persia, Uzun Hasan, who was also fighting the Turks, offered him an alliance, urging him at the same time to induce all the Christian princes to unite with the Persians against the common foe. These princes, as well as Pope Sixtus IV, gave him great praise; but when Stephen asked

from them assistance in men and money he received none. He nevertheless succeeded in annihilating the Ottoman army at *Racova*, in 1475, which was considered the greatest victory that the Christians had ever before won over the Turks. The following year, however, the Sultan advanced at the head of 200,000 men against Moldavia. Having granted his peasant soldiers leave for a while to look after their homes, which had been devastated by a raid of the Tartars, Stephen was left with only 10,000 horsemen, with whom he entrenched himself in the clearing of a wood at *Rasboieni*. The Rumanians placed their wives and children in the middle of their camp, that their danger might inspire and sustain their courage in this desperate fight. But these men, the best of the Moldavian land, could do no more than die fighting, and it was only with a few of them that Stephen left the field and retired into Polonia. He rapidly organized a new army, harassed the Turks by continuous guerilla warfare, and finally crushed the Sultan's armies on the banks of the Danube. Not only was he refused all assistance by the neighbouring princes, but Vladislav, King of Hungary, conspired with his brother Albert, King of Polonia, to conquer and divide Moldavia between them. A Polonian army entered the country, but was utterly destroyed by Stephen in the forest of *Kosmin*.

With the death of Stephen the Great the period of struggle for the independence of Moldavia comes to an end. Having had enough opportunity to judge at its right value the friendship of the Christian princes, on his death-bed Stephen advised his son Bogdan to submit to the Turks of his own free will. Thus Moldavia, like Wallachia, came under Turkish suzerainty. Taking advantage of the ever-recurring rivalries for the throne,

the Turks exploited the Rumanian countries in the most shameless fashion, making the candidates to the throne pay enormous sums of money for their support. This money was usually borrowed, and once on the throne the princes impoverished the population by ever-increasing taxation. Tribute, as well as provisions, means of transport, and all kinds of services for the Turkish armies were exacted.

Nevertheless the Rumanians had not lost all consciousness of national strength, and they proved it when *John the Terrible*, nephew of Stephen the Great, succeeded to the throne in 1572. He refused to pay tribute to the Turks, and repeatedly defeated the Turkish forces. This greatly alarmed the Sultan, who ordered prayers to be said in all the mosques, whilst a new army of 100,000 men advanced against John. Anxious on account of the news which reached them, the soldiers of John asked him how many were their enemies. 'We shall count them on the battlefield,' was the reply. Unfortunately his cavalry, composed of nobles who were not over-loyal to a prince who defended the peasants, deserted to the enemy. John entrenched himself and would have been able to resist for a long time, save that he had no water. His soldiers spread pieces of linen over the dew-drenched grass to be able at least to moisten their lips, but in the end they had to surrender. The Turks tore the Rumanian prince to pieces and dipped their swords in his blood, that his courage and his gallantry might pass to them. Thus died the last hero of Moldavia.

The Rumanian provinces were suffocating, strangled by the bloodthirsty hands of the Turks. The reigns of John the Terrible and Michael the Brave were like the last convulsions of a struggling victim.

Michael the Brave, Prince of Wallachia (1593-1601),

taking advantage of the Turks being engaged in a war against the German Emperor, Rudolf II, and their vassal, Sigismond Bathori, Prince of Transylvania, crossed the Danube and ravaged the Turkish provinces up to the Balkans. As the Turks were relying on supplies from the Rumanian provinces, they were compelled for the time being to abandon hostilities against Germany, in order first to suppress the revolt in Wallachia. But the Sultan's armies were utterly crushed by the much smaller forces of Michael. A prince favourable to Turkey having then succeeded to the throne of Transylvania, Michael invaded and conquered this province, pushed further into Moldavia, and succeeded in bringing the three Rumanian countries under his rule. 'Prince of the whole land of Hungro-Wallachia, of Transylvania, and of Moldavia,' is the proud title inscribed in the documents of the period. Such deeds were not to the liking of the neighbouring princes, however, and intrigues ended in the assassination of Michael. 'It was not the Turkish sword which put an end to the exploits of Michael the Brave. The Magyars of Transylvania betrayed him; the German Emperor condemned him; and a Greek in Austria's service, General Basta, had him sabred: as though it were fated that all the enemies of the Rumanian race, the Magyar, the German, the Greek, should unite to dip their hands in the blood of the Latin hero.'¹ Michael only ruled for eight years. The union of the Rumanian lands which he realized did not last long; but it gave form and substance to the idea which was from that day onward to be the ideal of the Rumanian nation.

The fundamental cause of all the sufferings of the Rumanian principalities was the hybrid 'hereditary-

¹ Alfred Rambaud, *Introduction to Xenopol*, op. cit., i. xix.

elective' system of succession to the throne, which prevailed also in most of the neighbouring countries. All members of the princely family were eligible for the succession ; but the right of selecting among them lay with an assembly composed of the higher nobility and clergy. All was well if a prince left only one successor. But if there were several, even if natural children, claiming the right to rule, then each endeavoured to gain over the nobility with promises, and often even sought the support of neighbouring countries. This system rendered easier and hastened the establishment of Turkish domination ; and corruption and intrigues, in which even the Sultan's harem had a share, became capital factors in the choice and election of the ruler.

Economically and intellectually all this was disastrous. The Rumanians were an agricultural people. The numerous class of small freeholders (*moshneni* and *razeshi*), not being able to pay the exorbitant taxes, often had their lands confiscated by the princes. Often, too not being able to support themselves, they sold their property and their very selves to the big landowners. Nor did the nobles (*boyards*) fare better. Formerly free, quasi-feudal warriors, seeking fortune in reward for services rendered to their prince, they were often subjected to coercive treatment on his part now that the throne depended upon the goodwill of influential personages at Constantinople. Various civil offices were created at Court, either necessitated by the extension of the relations of the country or intended to satisfy some favourite of the prince. Sources of social position and great material benefit, these offices were coveted greedily by the boyards, and those who obtained none could only hope to cheat fortune by doing their best to undermine the position of the prince.

THE PHANARIOTE RULE

These offices very presently fell to the lot of the Phanariotes (Greek merchants and bankers inhabiting the quarter of Phanar) who had in some way or another assisted the princes to their thrones, these being now practically put up to auction in Constantinople. As a natural consequence of such a state of affairs the thoughts of the Rumanian princes turned to Russia as a possible supporter against Ottoman oppression. A formal alliance was entered into in 1711 with the Tsar Peter the Great, but a joint military action against the Turks failed, the Tsar returned to Russia, and the Porte threatened to transform Moldavia, in order to secure her against incipient Russian influence, into a Turkish province with a Pasha as administrator. The nobles were preparing to leave the country, and the people to retire into the mountains, as their ancestors had done in times of danger. It is not to be wondered at that, under the menace of losing their autonomy, the Rumanians 'welcomed the nomination of the Dragoman of the Porte, Nicholas Mavrocordato, though he was a Greek. The people greeted with joy the accession of the first Phanariote to the throne of the Principality of Moldavia'¹ (1711).

Knowledge of foreign languages had enabled the Phanariotes to obtain important diplomatic positions at Constantinople, and they ended by acquiring the thrones of the Rumanian principalities as a recompense for their services. But they had to pay for it, and to make matters more profitable the Turks devised the ingenious method of transferring the princes from one province to another, each transference being considered

¹ Xenopol, *op. cit.*, ii. 138.

as a new nomination. From 1730 to 1741 the two reigning princes interchanged thrones in this way three times. They acquired the throne by gold, and they could only keep it by gold. All depended upon how much they were able to squeeze out of the country. The princes soon became past masters in the art of spoliation. They put taxes upon chimneys (*fumarit*), and the starving peasants pulled their cottages down and went to live in mountain caves; they taxed the animals (*vacarit*), and the peasants preferred to kill the few beasts they possessed. But this did not always help them much, for we are told that the Prince Constantin Mavrocordato, having prescribed a tax on domestic animals at a time when an epidemic had broken out amongst them, ordered the tax to be levied on the carcasses. 'The administrative régime during the Phanariote period was, in general, little else than organized brigandage,' says Xenopol.¹ In fact the Phanariote rule was instinct with corruption, luxury, and intrigue. Though individually some of them may not deserve blame, yet considering what the Phanariotes took out of the country, what they introduced into it, and to what extent they prevented its development, their era was the most calamitous in Rumanian history.

The war of 1768 between Russia and Turkey gave the former Power a vague protectorate over the Rumanian provinces. In 1774 Austria acquired from the Turks by false promises the northern part of Moldavia, the pleasant land of *Bucovina*. During the new conflict between Turkey and Russia, the Russian armies occupied and battered upon the Rumanian provinces for six years. Though they had again to abandon their intention of making the Danube the southern boundary of their

¹ Xenopol, *op. cit.*, ii. 308.

empire—to which Napoleon had agreed by the secret treaty with Tsar Alexander (Erfurt, September 27, 1808)—they obtained from Turkey the cession of Bessarabia (Treaty of Bucarest, May 28, 1812), together with that part of Moldavia lying between the Dnjester and the Pruth, the Russians afterwards giving to the whole region the name of *Bessarabia*.

CONTEMPORARY PERIOD

In 1821 the Greek revolution striving to create an independent Greece broke out on Rumanian ground, supported by the princes of Moldavia and Muntenia. Of this support the Rumanians strongly disapproved, for, if successful, the movement would have strengthened the obnoxious Greek domination ; if unsuccessful, the Turks were sure to take a terrible revenge for the assistance given by the Rumanian countries. The movement which was started about the same time by the ennobled peasant, *Tudor Vladimirescu*, for the emancipation of the lower classes, soon acquired, therefore, an anti-Greek tendency. Vladimirescu was assassinated at the instigation of the Greeks ; the latter were completely checked by the Turks, who, grown suspicious after the Greek rising and confronted with the energetic attitude of the Rumanian nobility, consented in 1822 to the nomination of two native boyards, Jonitza Sturdza and Gregory Ghica, recommended by their countrymen, as princes of Moldavia and Wallachia. The iniquitous system of 'the throne to the highest bidder' had come to an end.

The period which marks the decline of Greek influence in the Rumanian principalities also marks the growth of Russian influence. The first meant economic exploitation, the second was a serious menace to the very existence of the Rumanian nation.

The two provinces were again occupied by Russia at the outbreak of the conflict of 1828, and a provisory Russian government established. Though restored to Turkey by the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), the rights of the Porte being limited to the exaction of a monetary tribute, they remained under Russian occupation up to 1834, pending the payment of the war indemnity by Turkey. The assemblies of both provinces for the first time gave expression to the desire that the two countries should be united under a foreign prince, not belonging to any of the three neighbouring Powers. But this idea was quashed by the opposition of Russia, Turkey, and Austria, the strengthening of the Rumanian nation not being compatible with the designs of any one of these Powers.

Meanwhile a rapid intellectual development hastened the awakening of national consciousness. The sons of the nobility were sent to study in France, and the resultant contact with French civilization roused the sleeping Latin spirit, drowned in the flood of stranger influences. Western Europe also began to interest itself in this nation which had emerged from centuries of suffering and obscurity, more inspirited than ever. Political and literary events prepared the ground for this Rumanian *Renaissance*; and when in 1848 the great Revolution broke out, it spread at once over the Rumanian countries. The Rumanians of Transylvania rose against the tyranny of the Magyars; those of Moldavia and Wallachia against the oppressive influence of Russia. A joint action of Turkish and Russian forces soon checked the movement, and, as a result, the elective assemblies were abolished and replaced by Councils (*divans*) nominated by the princes (Convention of Balta Liman, May 1, 1849).

The Treaty of Paris, March 30, 1856, reincorporated with Moldavia the southern part of Bessarabia, abolished the Russian protectorate, and maintained the suzerainty of the Sultan, who promised to give the two principalities an independent national administration. The representative of France, Count Walewsky, also put forward the question of the union. The idea being, however, strongly opposed by Turkey and Austria, it was decided to convene in both principalities special assemblies (*divans ad hoc*) representing all classes of the population; their wishes were to be embodied, by a European commission, in a report for the consideration of the Congress.

The idea of union was a nightmare to the Sublime Porte, and her commissary compiled the electoral lists in so arbitrary a manner, that it might once more have fallen through, had it not been for the invaluable assistance which the Emperor Napoleon gave the Rumanian countries. As Turkish policy was relying mainly on England's support, Napoleon brought about a personal meeting with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, at Osborne (August 1857), the result of which was a compromise: Napoleon agreed to defer for the time being the idea of an effective union of the two principalities, England undertaking on the other hand to make the Porte cancel the previous elections, and proceed to new ones after revision of the electoral lists.

The assemblies which met after the new elections proclaimed that union, autonomy, and neutrality under a hereditary foreign dynasty were necessary to the welfare and reorganization of the Rumanian countries. These wishes were considered by a second Congress (Paris, May 1858); but three months of discussion and the sincere efforts of the French representative brought about no understanding on the point of the union. The

decision provided for a common legislation, a common army, a Central Committee composed of representatives of both assemblies for the discussion of common affairs, and a permanent alliance of the two countries under the name of 'The United Principalities'. But they were to continue to form two separate States, each with its own legislature, and each to elect for life a prince of Rumanian descent.

Though by no means wholly satisfied with this imperfect union, the Rumanians proceeded to the election of their rulers. Several candidates competed in Moldavia. To avoid a split vote the name of an outsider was put forward the day before the election, and on January 17, 1859, Colonel *Alexander John Cuza* was unanimously elected. In Wallachia the outlook was very uncertain when the Assembly met under great excitement on February 5.¹ A few patriots put forth and urged the election of Cuza, and the Assembly unanimously adopted this spirited suggestion.

Having realized that there was no hope of the Powers consulting anything but their own interest, by consciously and of set purpose hampering the emancipation of a long-suffering nation, the Rumanians had quietly accomplished by this master-stroke the reform which was an indispensable condition towards assuring a better future. Italy's military preparations prevented Austria from intervening, and two years later the new state of things was sanctioned by the Porte. The final step was taken in 1861, when the two principalities united under the name of 'Rumania', were given a common national assembly and a common government.

Cuza's reign was responsible for some reforms which

¹ This date corresponds with January 24th, old style, when the union of the Principalities is celebrated in Rumania.

fundamentally transformed the social and political organization of the country. He secularized and turned into state property the domains of the monasteries, which, in Greek hands, had acquired one-fifth of the total area of the land (Law of December 13, 1863). Cuza then introduced the great reform which made the peasant tenants owners of the land they laboured on (Law of August 14, 1864). The Assembly having opposed this measure, it was dissolved (May 2, 1864). Universal suffrage was introduced, but at the same time the power of the elective assembly was restricted by the creation of a 'Senate', which, composed of nominated members and members by right, was designed to exercise a moderating influence, thus, by its very nature, increasing the influence of the Crown. A whole series of laws followed, mostly adapted from the French laws, the most important being the Educational Act of 1864. It provided for gratuitous and obligatory elementary education, and for gratuitous education of all other degrees. Cuza also founded the Universities of Jassy (1860) and Bucarest (1864), as well as a large number of special and technical schools.

These reforms were unfortunately coupled with serious administrative and governmental evils. Organized and fostered by the Opposition, an anti-government plot led to the forced abdication of Cuza (February 23, 1866), and the prince left the country a few days later. No disturbance whatever took place, not one drop of blood was shed. Upon the very day of the abdication of Cuza the National Assembly proceeded to the election of a new prince, and the general desire being to have a ruler of foreign descent, the choice fell on Count Philip of Flanders, brother of the King of Belgium. The Porte protested at once against this selection, and as neither

France nor Russia was favourably disposed towards it, Count Philip considered it wise to refuse the offer.

Whilst a new Conference met in Paris, French circles put forward the candidature of Prince Carol of Hohenzollern (born April 20, 1839 ; died October 1914), which was also supported by England. A plebiscite showed the immense popularity of this candidature in Rumania, but on account of the opposition of Austria, Turkey, and Russia, the Paris Conference did not acquiesce in the selection, insisting that, in accordance with the decisions of 1858, the Prince should be of Rumanian descent. Nevertheless the National Assembly sanctioned the election of 'Carol I, Hereditary Prince of Rumania'.

Travelling incognito with a small suite, the prince second class, his suite first, Prince Carol descended the Danube on an Austrian steamer, and landed on May 8 at Turnu-Severin, the very place where, nearly eighteen centuries before, Emperor Trajan had alighted and founded the Rumanian nation. It was only after long and strenuous negotiations that the signatories of the Paris Convention recognized the election of Prince Carol, who visited in 1869 various European Courts in order to strengthen the external relations of his country. On his way back he became engaged, and was married on November 15, in Neuwied to Princess Elisabeth of Wied (born 1843).

Prince Carol came to the throne with the firm intention of freeing the country from Turkish suzerainty at the first opportunity. The majority of his Cabinet desired neutrality, and when it became clear, about 1875, that a conflict between Russia and Turkey was imminent, the Prince endeavoured to obtain from the Powers a guarantee of Rumanian neutrality. His *démarche* failed, and under the circumstances the only reasonable way was to come to terms with Russia for the purpose of

common action. The Convention of April 16, 1877, granted free passage under 'friendly conditions' to the Russian armies, Russia undertaking to respect the political rights as well as 'to maintain and defend the actual integrity of Rumania'. The participation of the Rumanian troops in the operations against Turkey was, however, not accepted. The Russian forces began the passage of the Pruth on April 24, and two days later the Turkish batteries across the Danube opened fire against the Rumanian towns. In consequence of this, the independence of Rumania was formally proclaimed on May 23, 1877.

The Russian armies having met with two serious defeats at Plevna, the co-operation of Rumania was persistently solicited, and Prince Carol was given the supreme command over the united forces before Plevna. After a glorious but terrible struggle, Plevna, followed at short intervals by other strongholds, fell, the peace preliminaries were signed, and Prince Carol returned to Bucarest at the head of his victorious army. Notwithstanding the flattering words in which the Tsar spoke of the Rumanian share in the success of the campaign, Russia did not admit that Rumania should take part in the Peace Conference. By the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878) Rumania's independence was recognized; Russia obtained from Turkey the Dobrudja and the delta of the Danube, reserving for herself the right to exchange these against Bessarabia. The Rumanian Government protested against this stipulation, and, having prepared to oppose an occupation of the province, Russia threatened 'to disarm' the Rumanian army; to which Prince Carol replied that 'the Rumanian army may well be destroyed, but could never be disarmed'.

A Congress was summoned to Berlin to settle the

Eastern Question. Russia strongly opposed even the idea that the Rumanian delegates should be allowed to put their case before the Congress, and consent was obtained only with difficulty, after Lord Salisbury, England's representative, had ironically remarked that 'having heard the representative of Greece, which was claiming foreign provinces, it would be but fair to listen also to the representatives of a country which claimed only what was its own'. The incorporation of Bessarabia with Russia was nevertheless ratified by the Congress, on July 13, 1878. Rumania was deprived of a rich and fertile province, with a fundamentally Rumanian population, receiving in exchange a swamp, the sandy soil of which was hardly capable of cultivation, and the population of which was composed of Turks, Tartars, Bulgarians, and a handful of Rumanians. The Rumanians could do nothing but submit and console themselves with, and mark well, the words which Lord Beaconsfield sympathetically addressed to them, that 'in politics the best services are often rewarded with ingratitude'. Thence onward Rumania passed through a period of comparative quiet in her external relations. On the 10th (22nd) of May, 1881, the country was proclaimed a kingdom, and upon the head of the first King of Rumania was placed a crown of steel made from one of the guns taken before Plevna from an enemy centuries old.

It may be interesting to note that after the abdication of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, in 1887, the Bulgarian throne was offered to King Carol. It is probable that the project was opposed both by Russia and by Austria; but Bucarest also wisely rejected it. The deep racial differences and the complete contrast in national ideas would have made an harmonious political union between the two peoples impossible.

In the absence of direct descendants and according to the constitution, the King's nephew, Prince Ferdinand of Hohenzollern (born 1865), was named Heir Apparent to the Rumanian throne. In 1892 he married Princess Marie of Coburg, and following the death of King Carol last year, he acceded to the throne as Ferdinand I.

HOME AND FOREIGN POLICY SINCE 1866

Prince Carol's task was no easy one. It was to rule over a nation which, attaining to freedom after many centuries of oppression, was prone to be carried away by an inexperienced enthusiasm for the liberal ideas of the time. The extremely liberal constitution of 1866, which resembled that of Belgium more than any other, reflected this spirit, and was rather the result of historical development than the natural outgrowth of social evolution. The ineptitude of a nation which, having at last won the right to speak aloud, believed that to clamour against anything that meant 'rule' was the only real and full assertion of liberty, and the laxity of a band of politicians bred upon Phanariote morality, hampered the efforts of the Prince, who, acclaimed a saviour when the country was groaning under foreign oppression, was now accused of enmity towards Latinism. This internal conflict became most acute at the outbreak of the Franco-German war, in 1870, when M. P. Carp, at the time Secretary for Foreign Affairs, declared in Parliament that 'where the Latin race is there also is our heart', and when the ill-considered behaviour of part of the population and of certain politicians nearly provoked Prince Carol to abdicate. Nothing but the sound patriotism of a few statesmen saved the country from what would have been a real misfortune.

The new era found the country partly lacking in

organization, or at the best fettered by obsolete institutions. Our politicians, it would seem, thought to attain Western civilization at a bound. But the pace was too rapid, the result was merely a veneer, thinly laid over the surface of national life. The most liberal institutions of the West were adopted without taking the general social condition of the country into consideration. A backward institution must of necessity follow the growing spirit of a community; a premature institution cannot possibly help a country to skip whole stages of natural development. It was as though a child were dressed in the clothes of a grown person and called a 'man'.

The bulk of the population, being completely illiterate, could not realize the rights and duties imposed by the new organization. They had to rely for enlightenment upon the upper classes, and these did not fail to let the peasant know his duties, though conveniently omitting to explain his rights. As the democratic Rumanian constitution abolished all titles of nobility, that harmless sop to the vanity of an immature society, the upper classes strove to secure posts in the new polity. They usually had neither interest in nor aptitude for these posts, which were generally obtained through bribery. The political field absorbed in this way all the greater land-owners, who formed the upper classes in Rumania, and they leased their lands to the best paying tenant. Rumanian leases as a rule are short (five to ten years), and the tenant has therefore no interest in introducing costly improvements into the existing archaic methods of agriculture.

Neither owner nor tenant has time to think of the peasant, nor can the latter do anything for himself, as he has no direct vote. Fifty of them send one delegate, having one vote, to the election which takes place in the

chief town of the district, and once there, the pressure of the authorities, which are organized completely on a political basis, or their generosity, induces the delegate to vote for the Government candidate. Although since 1904 the vote is secret, the influence of the administration is so effective, or the fear of it so great, that hardly any member of the Opposition would be elected at all but for the Government running no candidate in certain constituencies, so that it may not be deprived of a *pro forma* opposition.

A numerous army of officials forms the backbone of the political parties. Few offices only are permanent, even such as that of Postmaster-General changing with every Government. Their salaries are generally very small, so they have to redress this in one way or another. When in opposition they live precariously on party funds, until the necessity arises of replenishing their reserves, when they begin to attack the members and the policy of the Government, whatever it may be, in the most ruthless manner. Newspapers, public meetings, street demonstrations, all and every means are employed to force the Cabinet to resign.

To such conditions the 'two party' system was the most suitable, and, as it had support in high quarters, no third party was possible until recently, when M. Take Ionescu and his followers left the Conservatives in order to found the Conservative-Democratic party. The two old parties which alternately held the reins were the Liberal (founded by John Bratianu, whose son, M. John Bratianu, is its present leader) and the Conservative (founded by Lascar Catargiu, now led by M. Alexandre Marghiloman). These descriptive titles mean, however, but little: Rumanian party policy is not based on political principles, but political principles on party policy.

The Liberals, who include the majority of the big land-owners, are the real supporters of Conservative ideas. But the views held by a party upon a certain question often suffer fundamental changes when passing from opposition to power ; and that such a thing should happen without the daily activities of the country being in the least affected clearly shows the hollowness of Rumanian politics. The officials are the class chiefly interested in politics, and the only change likely to affect them is the passing from opposition to power, or vice versa. A Rumanian political party has only one aspiration : to rule, and to rule alone. It may be mentioned as characteristic of the psychology of our parties that in 1888, after the defection of the Cabinet led by M. Carp, one of our ablest statesmen, and, what is more, one of the few who never bargained with his principles, only a small minority remained faithful to him, the majority of the Conservatives choosing as their leader G. Cantacuzino, whose only qualification was that of being the biggest landowner in Rumania.

This may explain, perhaps, how it is possible that, though much progress has been made, nothing has been done for the peasantry, four-fifths of the population of Rumania existing under conditions little different from those of the Daco-Romans. Mighty palaces have been built, but nothing has been done towards providing work for the peasant during the long winter months when he has nothing to do and less to eat.

Absorbed to some extent by the introduction of various reforms and largely by party disputes, the politicians were not able to devote themselves to shaping the national ideal. That Rumanians under foreign domination have maintained their nationality is due to purely intrinsic causes.

In Bucovina there are about 250,000 Rumanians. Formerly exposed to Germanization, they are now supported by the Germans against the rapidly expanding Ruthene element, the advance guard of Slavism.

Bessarabia contains about one million Rumanians, almost all of the peasant class. Their Russification could only be effected by education; and, this being so, the reactionary attitude of the Russian Government towards education has enabled the Rumanian peasants to maintain their customs and their language.

In the Trans-Carpathian provinces, the cradle of the Rumanian nation, three and a half million Rumanians are constantly struggling for national existence. The great political ambitions of the Magyars are handicapped by their numerical inferiority, a handicap which can only be removed by oppressive measures taken at the expense of the other elements forming the heterogeneous population of Hungary.

As already mentioned, part of the Rumanian nobility of Hungary went over to the Magyars, the remainder emigrating over the mountains. Debarred from the support of the noble class, the Rumanian peasantry lost its state of autonomy, which changed to one of serfdom to the soil upon which they toiled. Desperate risings in 1324, 1437, 1514, 1600, 1784, tended to lift the economic oppression; that of 1848 aimed primarily at establishing a right to national existence. Transylvania was till then a separate Austrian duchy, but its incorporation with Hungary was now demanded by the Magyars, who had in their turn risen against Austrian domination. They proclaimed 'that without nationality life was useless; to lose the words of their national speech would mean also the loss of their soul. . . . Liberty, if lost, might be recovered; nationality would be lost

for ever'. But that the other nationalities within Hungary should use the same argument could not be admitted.

The Hungarian movement was defeated with the help of Russia (Villagos, 1849), who intervened in order to prevent the revolt spreading to Poland. Transylvania remained a separate duchy enjoying full political rights up to the establishment of the Dual Monarchy in 1867. With this date moral oppression set in. Hungarian was forcibly introduced into the administration, even in districts where the bulk of the population did not understand this language. The electoral regulations were drawn up in such a manner that the Rumanians from Transylvania, though ten times as numerous as the Magyars, send a far smaller number of representatives to the National Assembly than the latter. To quash all protest a special press law was introduced for Transylvania. But the Rumanian journalists being usually acquitted by the juries, a new regulation prescribed that press offences should be tried only at Kluj—the sole Transylvanian town with a predominating Hungarian population—a measure which was in fundamental contradiction to the principles of justice.¹

Protests have only resulted in an increase of the oppressive measures. And yet there should be union between Hungarians and Rumanians, since they are equally menaced by the growing Slavo-Teutonic pressure. But for this purpose it is absolutely necessary that the Hungarians should begin by changing their policy. The Rumanians cannot possibly try to avoid

¹ During a period of 22 years (1886-1908), 367 Rumanian journalists were charged. Together with those of other nationalities, the total number was 850, with a total of 216 years of imprisonment and fines amounting to Fcs. 138,000.

a distant danger by giving way to a nearer one : they cannot elect to die now in order that they may not die later.' ¹

RUMANIA'S PRESENT ATTITUDE

The sufferings of Transylvania and the fact that she has given Rumania many great men in literature and science has kept alive and constantly intensified the interest which the Rumanians within the kingdom took in their brethren across the mountains. As a complementary element influencing Rumania's attitude may be mentioned the deep feeling caused by the loss of Bessarabia at a time when Rumanian national aspirations had taken definite shape. Hence from the material point of view, Rumania seemed to be equally interested in joining either one or the other of the parties now at war. But Rumania owes her present independence in a great measure to the support which France gave her in 1856 and 1858, while the intellectual influence since exercised by that nation upon the Rumanians is so intense, that the Rumanian historian Xenopol justly says that ' nous ne sommes qu'une reproduction plus ou moins fidèle de la civilisation française '. There could, therefore, never have been a question of Rumania joining Germany, unless she was forced to do so by some aggressive action of one of the Powers allied to France. The only possible question was : should Rumania go to war at all (and in this case it could assuredly be only on the side of the Allies), or should she remain neutral ? Her attitude of hesitation is explained and justified by various considerations, which may be grouped, for the sake of clearness, as of the past, the present, and the future.

¹ Xenopol, *Les Roumains*, Paris, 1909.

PAST

A consequence of the seizure of Bessarabia in 1878 was to drive Rumania within the sphere of Austro-German influence, the more so as Prince Carol was of German origin and deeply attached to his native country, and was on terms of friendship with the old Emperor of Austria. But during the last Balkan conflict Austria failed to support Rumania diplomatically against the tergiversations of Bulgaria. Had Austria given such support the second Balkan war would probably have been averted, especially when it is remembered that Russia seriously urged Bulgaria not to initiate a conflict with her former allies. Now we know that Austria worked, indeed, to a contrary end. Signor Giolitti has told the Italian Chamber that on August 9, 1913, the day after the signing of the Peace of Bucarest, Austria intimated her intention of attacking Servia, and was only dissuaded by the influence of Italy and Germany.¹ On the same day on which this declaration was made M. Take Ionescu, the leader of the Conservative-Democratic party, and at the time of the Balkan wars Home Secretary for Rumania, disclosed that in May 1913 Austria's representative in Bucarest, Count Fürstenberg, was instructed to inform the Rumanian Government that Austria would intervene by force of arms in favour of Bulgaria, should the latter come into conflict with her former allies.² This was intended as a warning to Rumania, who had made it clear to Bulgaria that she would step in should such a conflict break out. The note conveying the above was read privately to a member of the Rumanian Cabinet, whose remarks were of such a character that Count

¹ *The Times*, December 3, 1914.

² *La Roumanie*, Bucarest, December 2, 1914.

some of our most eminent statesmen,¹ have not disclosed their mind. But I suppose that they consider, and, one must confess, not without right, that Rumania has no interest in seeing Russia completely successful. If Germany and Austria win, Russia will nevertheless remain a serious opponent of any effort Austria may make to bring under her domination parts of Rumania or of some Balkan state. But if the Allies win, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy will no doubt be dismembered, and Rumania will find herself in the not very enviable position of being tenderly squashed between the palm of the Slav and the fingers of the Magyar.

But further than this, one of the chief aims of Russian policy has always been the possession of the Dardanelles. Russia never was as near to its realization as she is now, when the Turkish Empire is a thing of the past, and when she has England as an ally, England who has always barred her way to the Golden Horn. Russia in Constantinople, however, means the economic strangulation of Rumania. Bulgaria has an outlet to the Aegean Sea, Serbia will no doubt have one to the Adriatic, Rumania depends entirely upon the Dardanelles. Her splendid position at the mouth of the Danube, her possessions on the Black Sea, will be of little worth with the mighty Empire of the Tsar dominating the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmora, and the Straits. Not only is the cheap waterway an absolute necessity for the bulky products, corn, petroleum, timber, which form the chief exports of Rumania; but these also form the chief exports of Russia, who, by a stroke of the pen, may rule Rumania completely out of competition.

¹ e. g. M. P. Carp, M. A. Marghiloman, and others are for neutrality, whereas M. N. Filipescu, another prominent Conservative, is, together with M. T. Jonescu, the chief advocate of military action.

Such a situation will ensure Rumania, no doubt, the full sympathy of the Western nations ; but no country would risk stepping in eventually for her sake, unless, as in the case of Belgium, vital interests of the Western Powers called for intervention. And such a case would certainly arise should Russia threaten the independence of Rumania.

It is the interest, therefore, and one may even say the duty, of the Western nations to favour the idea of a strong Rumania ; for this country, having served as bulwark to pagan Rome against the invasion of the barbarians, and bulwark to Christian Rome against the mounting tide of Turkish aggression, seems to be predestined by her geographical position to be for all time an advanced defence to Western civilization.

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POETRY AND WAR

Soul of the World, Knowledge without thee,
What hath the Earth that truly glorious is ?
Why should our pride make such a stir to be,
To be forgot ? What good is like to this—
To do worthy the writing, and to write
Worthy the reading and the world's delight ?

S. DANIEL.

SOMEONE, I forget who, has said that we English are not a military nation, but that we *are* a very warlike and even pugnacious people. It is very true. There is no fear that we shall ever become militarist, but we *are* a fighting race. 'If blood be the price of Admiralty, Lord God we ha' paid in full !'

Perhaps that is one of the reasons why we English are, with all our practicality, pre-eminently a poetical nation, for that too we most certainly are. It may safely be claimed that no modern nation possesses a poetical literature finer in quality or richer in quantity than our own. Not France, though she has much fine poetry and more fine prose ; not Italy, though her fair fields have been watered by an ever-flowing stream of poesy from Dante to Carducci. Certainly not Germany. The Germans to-day have somehow got it into their heads that they are, before all other nations, a nation of poets. Can they compare with us ? Let us put it into naval language. Their 'Grand Fleet' seems somewhat limited. Grant that they have one 'super-Dreadnought', the 'Goethe', admittedly a fine and

powerful ship; still she is hardly equal in guns or speed to the 'Shakespeare'. Grant that they have two or three other Dreadnoughts, the 'Lessing', the 'Schiller', and that swift and dangerous craft, largely fitted on French lines, the 'Heine', and that they possess a flotilla of minor vessels: what have they to put against the number or the variety of our armament?

No; Germany has fine poets and poems, for which the world is the richer, and which we must never, not even to-day, forget.

Some of the most poignant of modern war-poems are those of Detlev von Liliencron, who, born at Kiel in 1844, died six years ago, and fought both in the Austrian and in the Franco-Prussian War. But England has been, almost since she became England, the most poetical of European countries, and there is no poetic literature which for variety or force can be ranked beside ours, except that of ancient Greece. The consequence is that the history of these islands of ours might very largely be written from their poetry, and to a great extent in its very language.

There is an interesting book by Dr. Firth, the Regius Professor of History at Oxford, entitled *English History in English Poetry*, which shows what might be done in this way. But Professor Firth only deals with a special short and recent period, that from the French Revolution to the death of Queen Victoria. He might have begun far earlier, for these islands have been, as long as they have possessed any history, homes of poetry and nests of singing birds. The ancient Britons, as we know, had their 'bards'. We have not their poems preserved in a form which is readily available. But the story of Boadicea has produced two of the best war-poems we have.

The quiet, pious, evangelical Cowper was no 'muff' or pacifist. He wrote: 'England, with all thy faults, I love thee still'.

He also wrote :

When the British warrior Queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsels of her country's gods,

while Tennyson treated the same subject in one of the most splendid masterpieces of metrifcation which even he accomplished.

It is only when we come to the Saxons that what may be called the English poetic record begins. 'The Battle of Brunanburh', one of the most famous Early English poems, all can read in Tennyson's spirited and sledge-hammer version based on his son's prose translation. The English Chronicle contains other similar poems.

When the Normans came they brought their own poets in their train. It is interesting to contrast the account of the Battle of Hastings or Senlac, told in the *Roman de Rou*, with the English account both of Brunanburh and of Stamford Bridge. This Battle of Hastings again Tennyson has described for us in his play of *Harold*, briefly, but vividly, making happy use of a resonant Latin hymn.

The wars with Wales, with Scotland and France, the wars with Spain, the Dutch wars, the later wars with France and Spain combined, the great Napoleonic struggle, the Crimea, the Mutiny, the South African War, all of these have produced their poetry. The difficulty is to select. Some principle of selection is needed.

There are the 'descriptive' poems, the accounts of

stirring incidents by land or sea, there are the 'elegiac' poems, the dirges on the death of heroes, there are those special war-songs, the poems of stimulus or encouragement, there are the 'philosophic' poems speaking of the moral aspects of war.

Some pieces, of course, contain in one whole many, or all, of these elements.

Most striking, if rare, are the contemporary poems which preserve some touch of the life and colours of the time. They are like the Bayeux Tapestry, which is very poetical, and may indeed be called a war-poem in needlework, a drama or epic set out in *tableaux*.

One of the earliest collections of English war-poems has a special interest for us to-day, for it describes a war going on in exactly the region where we are fighting at this hour, the collection of poems by an author whose personal history is unknown, Laurence Minot,¹ describing the wars of Edward the Third, first in Scotland with the Battle of Halidon Hill, and then the Channel, and in the Low Countries. The very headings of the Cantos are suggestive.

I

Lithes and I sall tell yow tyll
Ye bataile of Halidon Hill.

II

Now for to tell yow will I turn
Of ye bataile of Banocburn.

III

How Edward ye King come in Braband
And took homage of all ye land.

¹ An excellent edition is that of Mr. Joseph Hall, M.A., published by the Clarendon Press.

Our Kinge was cumen, trewly to tell,
 Into Braband for to dwell.
 Ye Kayser Lowis of Bavere
 That in that land han had no pere,
 He and als his sons two,
 And other princes many mo.
 Bishoppes and Prelates were thare fele
 That had full mekill worldly wele.
 Princes and people, ald and yong,
 All that spake with Duchè tong.
 All thai come with great honowre
 Sir Edward to save and socowre.

Then follows an account of the naval battle of Sluys, or the 'Swin', in which Edward defeated the French. The description is very graphic :

King Edward unto sail was ful sune dight
 With erles and barons and many kene knight.
 Thai come before Blankebergh on Saint Jon's night
 That was to the Normondes a well sary sight,
 Yit trumped thai and daunced with torches ful bright
 In the wild waniand ¹ was thaire hertes light.
 Upon the morne efter, if I suth say
 A meri man Sir Robard out of Morlay
 At half eb in the Swin sought he the way
 Thare lered men the Normandes at bukler to play
 Helped tham no prayer that thai might pray
 The wreches er wonnen, thair wapin es oway.

A little later comes the account of Edward's march through Normandy and the famous battle of Crècy.

Stedes strong bilevid ² still
 Biside Cressy upon the grene :
 Sir Philip wanted all his will,
 That was wele on his sembland ³ sene

¹ 'The light of the waning moon.'

² Abode.

³ Countenance.

With spere and schelde and helmis schene
 The bare than durst thai noght habide ;
 Ye King of Beme was cant and kene,
 But there he left both play and pride.

But I must not linger. We must omit the cantos which tell how :

Sir David had of his men grete loss
 With Sir Edward at ye Nevil Cross.

or

How King Edward and his meniè
 Met with ye Spaniardes in ye see.

or

How gentill Sir Edward with his grete engines
 Wan with his wight men ye castill of Gynes (*Guines*).

From Crècy (1346) and Poitiers (1355) it is natural to pass to Agincourt (1418).

This famous battle may perhaps fitly open the chapter of what may be called modern English War Poetry. It is celebrated in some of the finest and most famous lines in our own or any tongue, by Shakespeare, and there are two very interesting ballads about it.

Alas ! that historians have to tell us that those battles and wars meant death to literature.

War, when it is really exhausting, crushes out, or burns up, poetry. It enfeebles the body politic, absorbs the interest, and lowers the vitality of a nation.¹

‘ No age of our history ’, says J. R. Green, ‘ is so sad and so sombre as the age which we traverse from the Third Edward to Joan of Arc.’

¹ Dr. Charles Saleeby, F.R.S., the well-known authority, has been most opportunely working out this problem, as may be seen in his ‘ Dysgenics of War ’.

These wars are therefore for the most part told, they are at any rate best commemorated, not by contemporaries, but by poets of a later time, writing when peace and her arts had plucked up heart and merriment again. Thus the melancholy and inglorious civil wars at home, the wars with France, sometimes melancholy too, but more glorious, are sung by the Elizabethan Drayton and Daniel, and above all by Shakespeare himself.

There is no need to quote again the passages of *Henry V*, about St. Crispin's Day, 'Crispin, Crispian', which have appeared in every book of War Poetry, in every newspaper, and been on every lip, during the last few months. But of the famous special songs of Agincourt some mention must be here made.

The Battle of Agincourt indeed may be taken as the point of departure in dealing with what may be called modern or living English War Poetry. Of Agincourt there are two poetic descriptions. The first is very early and anonymous. It will be found in a little volume of the 'Oxford Garland' series, entitled *Patriotic Poems*, selected by Mr. R. M. Leonard, which can be bought for sevenpence. It begins :

Agincourt, Agincourt !
 Know ye not Agincourt ?
 Where English slew and hurt
 All their French foemen ?
 With our pikes and bills brown
 How the French were beat down,
 Shot by our bowmen !

and it ends :

Agincourt, Agincourt !
 Know ye not Agincourt ?
 Dear was the victory bought
 By fifty yeomen.

Ask any English wench,
 They were worth all the French,
 Rare English bowmen ! ¹

The other is better known. It is the spirited poem by Michael Drayton, found in almost all the Anthologies, called 'The Battle of Agincourt', which begins :

Fair stood the wind for France
 When we our sails advance,
 Nor now to prove our chance,
 Longer will tarry ;
 But putting to the main
 At Kaux, the mouth of Seine
 With all his martial train
 Landed King Harry.

and ends :

Upon St. Crispin's day
 Fought was this noble fray,
 Which fame did not delay
 To England to carry ;
 Oh, when shall Englishmen
 With such acts fill a pen,
 Or England breed again
 Such a King Harry ?

At once famous it became. As Ben Jonson said :

Look how we read the Spartans were inflamed
 With bold Tyrtaeus' verse : when thou art named
 So shall our English youth urge on and cry
 An Agincourt ! an Agincourt ! or die.

When Tennyson wrote 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' he was supposed to have taken the rhythm from this poem. But he did not. He took it from a line in a prose account in *The Times*, 'Someone had blundered.'

¹ There is a variant reading 'women' which male readers may prefer.

The great central contest with the Armada, though both in its general character, its greater incidents, its natural setting, and its successive moments, one of the most poetic of all encounters, produced at the time no adequate poems. It has since, in the last and in the present century, found not a few poets.

There is Macaulay's ballad, a little rhetorical, but finely poetical too. There is Swinburne's tercentenary poem. There is Mr. Noyes's epic of Drake, large in its conception and its treatment. To-day there is Mr. Masfield's beautiful and magic poem 'Philip the King'.

But the contests with Spain, both before and after the Expedition of the Armada, have left their record in splendid and spirited ballads.

Three of these ballads, the 'Ballad of Lord Willoughby', the 'Ballad of Mary Ambree', about 1587, and the 'Ballad of the Winning of Cales', i. e. Cadiz, by the English, all date before the Armada.

That delightful sea song 'The Honour of Bristol', a little later in date, is inspired by the same spirit.

Above all, there is one most perfect and beautiful poem which does not deal, it is true, with the fight of the Armada, but with a fight in the same struggle, Tennyson's ballad of the *Revenge*.

This R. L. Stevenson rightly called one of the noblest ballads in the English language. It is also surely one of the most artistically perfect. Why is it so? What is it makes its peculiar excellence? It is, that it combines so many elements of beauty. The story is a very singular one. As Tennyson wrote about it to his wife, 'Sir Richard Grenville in *one* ship, the *Revenge*, fought *fifty-three* Spanish ships of the line for fifteen hours, a tremendous story, outrivalling Agincourt.' As

Froude wrote, 'The action struck a deeper terror, though it was but the action of a single ship, into the hearts of the Spanish people, it dealt a more deadly blow upon their fame and moral strength than the defeat of the Armada itself.' Both the hero and his ship were remarkable. Sir Richard Grenville, as we know from Sir Walter Raleigh, who tells the tale, was truly a 'gallant gentleman' and a man of that transcendent courage, at once resolute and explosive, that seems to be more than human. The *Revenge* herself had been Drake's ship when he fought the Armada three years earlier.

The poem itself is full of both musical and pictorial effect. There is not a line or a word too little or too much. Throughout it all there is a sense of the 'setting', of the contrasting beauty of the natural scene. At the last, when the awful human struggle, the heroism even to death, is over, nature reasserts herself and whelms all in her vast engulfing peace. I will not attempt to read all of it to you, but only two sections, which may perhaps illustrate my criticism, the ninth and the fourteenth.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over
the summer sea,

But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the
fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built
galleons came,

Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-
thunder and flame ;

Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with
her dead and her shame.

For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so
could fight us no more—

God of battles ! was ever a battle like this in the world
before ?

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant
and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English
few ;
Was he devil or man ? He was devil for aught they
knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the
deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien
crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own ;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke
from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earth-
quake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their
masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd
navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island
crag
To be lost evermore in the main.

It is the magic of Tennyson, a really great poet with a great heart, head, and soul, with a great spirit of patriotism.

Its effect is like that of Turner's picture of 'The Fighting Téméraire tugged to her last Berth' in the National Gallery.

The Civil Wars again brought forth fine poetry on both sides, Milton and Marvell over against the Cavaliers. All through *Paradise Lost* echo and thunder Milton's own experiences, the same which found voice in his great war-sonnets, the sonnet to Cromwell and others. But

against these it is only fair to set the fine songs of Lovelace and the Cavalier poets. You remember Lovelace's song :

GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field ;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As thou too shalt adore ;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honour more.

It is fair to remember this, and to remember that perhaps the best tribute of all to the ultimate nobility of the unhappy victim, the Royal Martyr, came from Marvell.

The struggle with Scotland produced fine poetry on both sides, the finest perhaps naturally in Scotland. Yet there is the magnificent English Border Ballad of 'Chevy Chase', which Sir Philip Sidney said moved his heart more than a trumpet, and which Ben Jonson would rather have written than all his works.

The last sad fight for Scottish independence in particular stirred her poets and her poetesses for many a long year. It inspired Scott. Who knows not *Marmion* ? It also inspired one of the most beautiful pieces of war poetry in the world, not always recognized as such, 'The Flowers of the Forest'. Do you know it ? Let me read it to you.

I've heard them lilting at our ewe-milking,
 Lasses a' lilting before dawn o' day ;
 But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning—
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At bughts,¹ in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning,²
 Lasses are lonely and dowie and wae ;
 Nae daffin', nae gabbin', but sighing and sabbing,
 Ilk ane lifts her leglin³ and hies her away.

In har'st, at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering,
 Bandsters are lyart,⁴ and runkled, and gray :
 At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching⁵—
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae younkers are roaming,
 'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle to play ;
 But ilk ane sits drearie, lamenting her dearie—
 The Flowers of the Forest are weded away.

Dool and wae for the order, sent our lads to the Border !
 The English, for ance, by guile wan the day ;
 The Flowers of the Forest, that fought aye the foremost,
 The prime of our land, are cauld in the clay.

We'll hear nae mair lilting at the ewe-milking ;
 Women and bairns are heartless and wae ;
 Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning—
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Do you know it ; do you know what its theme is,
 and how it came to be written ? It is about the Battle
 of Flodden. It was written by a young Scotch lady
 of good family and education, Miss Jean Elliot. Her
 brother, also a poet, as they were riding home in the
 family coach, bet her a pair of gloves that she could not
 write a good piece on Flodden. In a short space she
 wrote this. It has not unnaturally often been mistaken
 for a contemporary popular ballad.

¹ Pens.² Rallying.³ Milk pail.⁴ Grizzled.⁵ Coaxing.

The Dutch Wars found their poet in Dryden. Some may remember his *Astrea Redux*, with the splendid couplet, as Professor Saintsbury calls it, on the British Amphitrite :

Proud her returning Prince to entertain
With the submitted fasces of the main.]

and the *Annus Mirabilis*, which Mr. Pepys, Clerk of the Acts of the Navy, wrote down ' A very good poem '.

The eighteenth century, that formal age, was formal even in its war poetry. Take the great example, that of Addison's *Campaign*. The best way to read it is to read it restored to its setting in Thackeray's *Esmond*. Thackeray points the moral of the folly and sham glory which are the seamy side of war's splendour, and true heroism. But Addison himself knew what was good, as may be seen, though ' the little conceited wits of the Age ' laughed at them, from his papers in the *Spectator* on ' Chevy Chase '.

And the same moral had been pointed more simply by Southey in that well-known ballad which Mr. Palgrave very rightly included in the *Golden Treasury* :

It was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done.

The century which began with formal classicism ended, as all know, in the Revolution and the Romance of the new era. Burns belongs to the eighteenth century, but he had caught the breeze of the coming dawn. He wrote of war, as he wrote of everything, with fire. He is one of the most signal examples of a truth which should ever be remembered, that passion is the secret of poetry. Burns was all compact of passion. The passing of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century is perhaps nowhere more happily focused and illustrated than in

the one meeting which took place between Burns and Scott. The story is one of the most charming in literature. It is given in a letter of Scott's own in Lockhart's *Life of Burns* :

As for Burns, I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him ; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and less with the gentry of the West Country, the two sets that he most frequented. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Fergusson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among them I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sate silent, looked, and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side,—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms.

These lines were written beneath (lines pre-eminently characteristic of the eighteenth century) :

Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain—
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptised in tears.

Burns seemed much affected by the print, or, rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of *The Justice of Peace*. I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

The great war with Napoleon and its poetry I pass over. To tell all is, as the French proverb says, to be a bore. All are familiar with the poetry of Byron and Scott, and of the rival group, Wordsworth who has already been mentioned, Southey, and Coleridge. Independent of both is the best of all, Thomas Campbell.

The Crimean War made Tennyson the laureate of the nation. The Queen, well advised by Sir Robert Peel, had bestowed the official laurel on him only three years before.

Tennyson may not be the greatest of English war-poets, though I am not sure that he is not, but he is the most complete. He has treated war in so many ways. He has written poems, and those of the first order, upon it in every aspect. He has written on the spur of the moment, and after the event, sometimes not very long after the event, sometimes at a considerable distance of time.

The 'Charge of the Light Brigade', one of the very best ballads of its kind, was written in a moment, and on the moment, directly the news came to England; the 'Charge of the Heavy Brigade', less well known, and less fine, but still fine, was written some time after the event. So was that splendid ballad of the Mutiny, the 'Defence of Lucknow'.

A historic poem is the ballad of the *Revenge*, already dealt with. A splendid poem of the elegiac order, perhaps the finest of its kind in the language (Stevenson called it 'one of our few blood-boilers'), is the 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington'.

Of fighting, handled in the artistic, pictorial, epic style, there is abundance in *The Princess* and in the *Idylls*. Magnificent examples of the imaginative ballad treatment are Sir Galahad and Oriana.

On the philosophy of war there is the monodrama of *Maud*, and the 'Epilogue' to the 'Charge of the Heavy Brigade'.

For many years it was the fashion to scoff at *Maud*. Now the converted pacifist announces as his own discovery, exactly the teaching which *Maud* put forward sixty years ago, that war with all its horrors yet brings out many noble qualities.

Finally, of that kind of poetry which, when war is waging, is especially considered 'war poetry'—poems of the stimulating, hortatory, Tyrtæan kind, Tennyson has written many. It was no accident, though it was unexpected, that among his literary legacies his son should have found the vigorous 'Call to Arms', which he gave to the world last autumn and which seemed as if written for the contemporary crisis and the living hour.

It is no wonder that he bulks so large in the war Anthologies. War gives new values to poetry, sometimes by reviving the old values. Names like those of Mrs. Hemans, Campbell, Macaulay, Tennyson, Longfellow, recover their lustre, if indeed they had ever lost it. Let me say to any here, especially young readers who are in doubt where to place him, Don't pretend to admire Tennyson if you really do not. There was a time, and a long time, during which that was done. But if you do care for the 'Charge of the Light Brigade' or the *Revenge*, or 'Oriana', or the 'Duke of Wellington', don't be ashamed or afraid to say so.

The Crimea brought forth several fine war-poems by other poets besides Tennyson, such as Archbishop Trench's 'Alma'. Notably it brought forth one poem by an Englishman, but of New not Old England, worthy to be compared, though very different, even with

the ' Charge of the Light Brigade ', Longfellow's tribute to the heroism of womanhood not less than that of manhood, his poem on Florence Nightingale, the ' Lady with the Lamp ', in the hospital at Scutari.

To-day after sixty years she has her statue in London among the warriors with whom she was associated in her life, and from whom in her death it is meet that she should not be divided.

But the idea of her statue is based on the poem. You know the story on which that is founded ? It is well told in Sir E. T. Cook's Life. At night, when all was quiet in the hospital at Scutari, she used to go round the wards with a little lamp. The soldiers were observed to kiss her shadow as it fell upon the wall as she passed.

ST. FILOMENA

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts in glad surprise
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls,
Into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.

Honour to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low !

Thus, thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
The trenches cold and damp,
The starved and frozen camp.

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
The cheerless corridors,
The cold and stony floors.

Lo ! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see,
 Pass through the glimmering gloom,
 And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
 Her shadow, as it falls
 Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened and then closed suddenly,
 The vision came and went,
 The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
 That light its ray shall cast
 From portals of the past.

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land.
 A noble type of good
 Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall she be wanting here
The palm, the lily, and the spear,
 The symbols that of yore,
 Saint Filomena bore.

So she stands now, the foundress of an ever-lengthening line of war nurses and of peace nurses too, and a pioneer of army organization, *Dux femina facti*.

The Mutiny again furnished themes for several fine pieces, among the finest Tennyson's splendid 'Defence of Lucknow'. But the American Civil War is perhaps the best example in modern history of a war producing poetry.

The American War brought forth a large crop, and some of the best that America has produced, poetry indeed so far transcending the somewhat dead ordinary

American level that we are tempted to say that nothing but a great war will bring forth great poetry from America. All her best poets were roused—Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Bret Harte, Lowell, Holmes, Walt Whitman.

One of the best of the war-songs was a Southern poem, Randall's 'Maryland, my Maryland'. 'John Brown's Body', a war-song of the North, is, I believe, with some alteration, being sung amongst us to-day.

The War is still the heroic epoch of the States. It made Lincoln. It made Walt Whitman.

Walt Whitman distinctly says that it was the war that produced his *Leaves of Grass* and made him an effective poet.

These, however, and much more might have gone on and come to naught (almost positively would have come to naught) if a sudden, vast, terrible, direct and indirect stimulus for new and national poetic expression had not been given to me. It is certain, I say, that—although I had made a start before—only from the occurrence of the Secession War, and what it show'd me by flashes of lightning, with the emotional depths it sounded and arous'd (of course I don't mean in my own heart only, I saw it just as plainly in others, in millions)—that only from the strong flare and provocation of that war's sights and scenes, the final reasons for being of an autochthonic American song definitely came forth.

I went down to the war-field in Virginia (end of 1862), lived thenceforward in camp—saw great battles and the days and nights afterward—all the fluctuations, gloom, despair, hopes again arous'd, courage evoked—death readily risked—the *cause*, too—along and filling those agonistic and lurid years, 1863-4-5—the real parturition years (more than 1776-83 of this henceforth homogeneous Union) without those three or four years, my *Leaves of Grass*, as they stand, would not now be existing.

If you want to see how war strikes a real poet and

what it is indeed like, you should read not only Whitman's poems, but his prose, his 'Specimen Days'. I know nothing, not even Zola's *Débâcle*, that gives so vivid a picture of war—that war which, as one of Whitman's compatriots said, is *Hell*. Read in particular the section headed 'A Night Battle', 'Unnamed remains the bravest soldier', almost exactly like the German poem 'Death in the Cornfield', by Liliencron, 'A Glimpse of War's Hell-Scenes', and then, if your heart is too agonized, as it well may be, read 'The most Inspiring of All War's Shows', and, best of all, 'Home-made Music'. Read 'Beat, Beat Drums', 'Vigil Strange', and above all the poem on the memorable year Eighteen Sixty-one. I know no war poetry which moves me more, though some satisfies more my artistic sense.

EIGHTEEN SIXTY-ONE.

Arm'd year—year of the struggle :
No dainty rhymes or sentimental love verses for you,
terrible year,
Not you as some pale poetling seated at a desk lisping
cadenzas piano,
But as a strong man erect, clothed in blue clothes,
advancing, carrying a rifle on your shoulder,
With well-gristled body and sunburnt face and hands,
with a knife in the belt at your side,
As I heard you shouting loud, your sonorous voice ring-
ing across the continent,
Your masculine voice, O year, as rising amid the great
cities,
Amid the men of Manhattan I saw you, as one of the
workmen and dwellers in Manhattan,
Or with large steps crossing the prairies out of Illinois
and Indiana,
Rapidly crossing the West with springy gait and de-
scending the Alleghanies,
Or down from the Great Lakes or in Pennsylvania or on
deck along the Ohio river,

Or southward along the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers,
 or at Chattanooga on the mountain-top,
 Saw I your gait and saw I your sinewy limbs clothed in
 blue, bearing weapons, robust year,
 Heard your determined voice launched forth again and
 again,
 Year that suddenly sang by the mouths of the round-
 lipp'd cannon,
 I repeat you, hurrying, crashing, sad, distracted year.

Longfellow, deeply stirred, wrote a fine descriptive poem, the 'Ballad of the Cumberland'. He also wrote the noble apostrophe to the Union :

Sail on, O Union, strong and great :
 Humanity with all its fears,
 With all the hopes of future years,
 Is hanging breathless on thy fate !

In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
 In spite of false lights on the shore,
 Sail on nor fear to breast the sea,
 Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee ;
 Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
 Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
 Are all with thee, are all with thee.

Alter one word, alter 'Union' into 'Empire' ; is it not true, ought not our American kinsmen to recognize its truth to our own cause ?

Time would fail to quote Julia Ward Howes's 'Battle Hymn of the Republic', or Bret Harte's noble 'Reveille'. The spirit of each and all is the same.

Lowell, who also wrote the well-known humorous, wise, and witty *Biglow Papers*, when the war was over penned his beautiful Memorial ode :—

We sit here in the Promised Land
 That flows with Freedom's honey and milk :
 But 'twas they won it, sword in hand,
 Making the nettle danger soft for us as silk,

We welcome back our bravest and our best :
 Ah me ! not all ! some come not with the rest,
 Who went forth brave and bright as any here !
 I strive to mix some gladness with my strain,
 But the sad strings complain,
 And will not please the ear.
 I sweep them for a Paeon, but they wane
 Again and yet again
 Into a dirge, and die away, in pain.
 In these brave ranks I only see the gaps,
 Thinking of dear ones whom the dumb turf wraps,
 Dark to the triumph which they died to gain.
 Fitlier may others greet the living,
 For me the past is unforgiving ;
 I with uncovered head
 Salute the sacred dead,
 Who went, and who return not,—Say not so !
 'Tis not the grapes of Canaan that repay,
 But the high faith that failed not by the way.
 Virtue treads paths that end not in the grave ;
 No ban of endless night exiles the brave ;
 And to the saner mind
 We rather seem the dead that stayed behind.

The South African War is still recent in many memories and so are its songs, and I need not to revive them.

This war of to-day has had the natural effect of bringing into being many collections of war poetry, and I am bound to say that I think not a few of them are very good. Others there were, of course, in existence before. One of the very best books of the kind, I think, is still the *Lyra Heroica*, a book of verse for boys arranged by that indomitable 'poet of action', W. E. Henley, in 1892.

The selection is excellent ; the notes tell just what needs being told, and are full of manly sense and sensibility. Its happy motto is that often-quoted, incomparable quatrain of Scott :

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife !
To all the sensual world proclaim :
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

Its chief drawback for present purposes is that it does not contain any poems written after 1892, or any of Henley's own.

It is significant that of the war-anthologies of to-day one of the best is a volume drawing its inspiration from Henley, dedicated to his memory, called by a name of his invention, and bearing on its title-page a strophe from his ringing and singing ode ' England, my England '. It is compiled by Mr. Goodchild and published by Messrs. Jarrold. It opens with a number of poems inspired by the present war, and then passes to a very excellent selection of pieces written for the American War.

Another is ' Our Glorious Heritage ', with an excellent Introduction by that fine, discriminating judge, Dr. Beeching, Dean of Norwich. This too has a merit of its own, in that it includes some admirable Colonial pieces, the ' Canadian Volunteers ', the ' Birth of Australia ', and ' New Zealand '.

Another, again, somewhat more modern in scope, perhaps the most up-to-date of all, is a collection by that veteran Professor Knight, entitled *Pro Patria et Rege*, which again has an interesting Introduction.

The Oxford Press has put out two small volumes, both simple and cheap. One that is called *Patriotic Verse*, arranged by Mr. R. M. Leonard, already mentioned, sound both in its selection and in its brief notes. The other, entitled *War Poetry*, arranged by Mr. Christopher Stone, has a double interest. In the first place, it has a brilliant Introduction of an unusual, unconventional kind, written by that soldier who has so often shown how well he can wield the pen, General Sir Ian Hamilton.

Next, the collection itself is really 'historic'. It brings together many ballads and popular songs difficult to find collected elsewhere, and it gives them in their chronological order, and in their original form.

We wonder often what poetry our soldiers to-day really like. I suppose that the song which they have made the most use of, whatever it meant, is the well-known 'Tipperary'. It might look a little disappointing in an anthology. Here are many of what may be called the 'Tipperaries' of bygone times.

Of the poetry of the moment none, I think, is more significant than that which comes from the Colonies, from the heart and lips of those children of ours who are now grown to first manhood and are our youthful comrades in this common struggle. Significant, because it shows how deeply they are stirred. Canada has had her poets for some time. Conspicuous among them is Canon Frederick George Scott, of Quebec, now at the Front as an Army Chaplain. I should like to call your attention to a little volume of his entitled *The Gates of Time*, published by Messrs. Bagster in their sixpenny series. It includes his fine 'Hymn of Empire' and one or two other poems bearing on the war. Australia, to my mind, is a specially poetical country. Perhaps it is something in the geography of the South Seas. The Maoris seem to be a poetic race.

Certainly I thought one of the pieces of the truest poetry put out in the war, though it was not in verse, was the message of the small island Niue, or Savage Island, as it was most inappropriately called, in the region of New Zealand, inhabited by a people akin to the Maoris. You may have seen the message in *The Times*. It was a letter from twelve chiefs of the island. They sent £164 in money and the following words :

To King George V, and all those in authority and the brave men who fight. I am the island of Niue, a small child that stands up to help King George V.

Two poems from Australia have struck me very much. They are both by old Oxford men who have made their homes in Australia.

The first was a sonnet which appeared in *The Times*, by Mr. Archibald Strong, called 'Australia to England'.

The next has not, I think, appeared in England. It was inspired by the sight of the troops passing beneath the statue of Captain Cook at Sydney, and was written by Mr. John Sandes, of the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* :

AUSTRALIANS TO THE FRONT !

(Captain Cook hears the Drums)

From the Scheldt unto the Niemen,
Hark, the music of the drums !
Not unthrilled the souls of free men
When that instant message comes.
Rolling east the wild fantasia
Stirs the Orient blood to flame ;
And the drums call Australasia—
And she answers to her name.

Far away from hosts in battle,
Yet in time with marching feet.
Here and now the war-drums rattle
In the sunbright city street.
Horse and foot in martial manner,
Swift commands, and glances high,
Naked steel and silken banner—
Thus the ranks go proudly by.

But within the gardens spacious,
Not a stone's throw from the crowd
One who fronts the landscape gracious
Listens to the war-drums loud.

Beats the eager drummer harder,
And methinks the bronze can hear,
In those eyes a flash of ardour !
On that cheek a noble tear !

‘ Dauntless Captain, did’st thou ever,
With thy sailor-eyes of gray
Searching out from thy *Endeavour*
That sequestered flower-starred bay,
Dream that some day those who love thee
Here would stake their all of worth,
For the flag that waved above thee
And the land that gave thee birth ? ’

And the dauntless Captain listens :
Ah, if only he could speak !
But a vagrant raindrop glistens
On that scorched and blistered cheek,
And the faith that does not falter
Still may hear his whisper low :
‘ *Son, this new land doth not alter
Britain’s breed of long ago.* ’

What is the conclusion of the whole matter ? What does war do for poetry and poetry for war ? Some say that war does not produce good poetry. The truth is it produces much bad, and little good, but even in time of peace that is the usual proportion. Good poetry is always rare, very good poetry very rare. A few good poems war produces at the moment, as I have shown. Tennyson’s ‘ Charge of the Light Brigade ’, Longfellow’s ‘ Santa Filomena ’, Newbolt’s ‘ The Only Son ’, Kipling’s poem written the other day ‘ For all we have and are ’. More it produces after the event, when, as Wordsworth said, ‘ Passion is remembered in tranquillity ’, the *Persae* of Aeschylus, or the fine passages of Virgil and Horace on the Battle of Actium.

Others say that modern war is not romantic and that

science has destroyed the poetry of war. That, I imagine, has always been said. It was said when gunpowder superseded bows and arrows, and when steam made obsolete the stately sailing ship. I do not doubt it was said—there are signs that it was said—of the Iron Age which superseded that of Stone. It is partly, but only partly, true.

The accounts of the end of the *Emden*, of Admiral Beattie's or Admiral Sturdee's flying fight, when the ships were tearing through the seas at some thirty miles an hour and yet striking at eleven miles' distance, are as thrilling as anything I have ever read. The aeroplane, as Tennyson foresaw nearly ninety years ago, is as poetical as the sailing ship. Poetry, as I have endeavoured to show, brings out the deeper meaning, the 'lesson' of war. It shows its horror, and also its heroism, in a way which enables us to bear and to read both aright. In time of peace it keeps alive the noble temper which war, when it comes, evokes, the love of country, the spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice, the conviction that there are better things than ease and luxury, or party or personal gain or triumph. It fixes and it lights up those ideal values which, when all is at stake, and everything stands to be lost or won, are seen to be the real.

Let me conclude with one more example which, in its short space and beautifully simple form, illustrates, I think, much of what I have endeavoured to say, a poem produced in and by and for these days, the lines by Lord Crewe on the grave of his son-in-law Captain O'Neill, Member of Parliament, who fell in November last. They appeared first in the Harrow School Magazine and later were given to the world in *The Times*. With Lord Crewe's permission and that of *The Times* I quote them.

A GRAVE IN FLANDERS

Here in the marshland, past the battered bridge,
One of a hundred grains untimely sown,
Here with his comrades of the hard-won ridge
He rests unknown.

His horoscope had seemed so plainly drawn—
School triumphs, earned apace in work and play ;
Friendships at will ; then love's delightful dawn
And mellowing day.

Home fostering hope ; some service to the State ;
Benignant age ; then the long tryst to keep
Where, in the yew-tree shadow congregate,
His fathers sleep.

Was here the one thing needful to distil
From life's alembic, through this holier fate,
The man's essential soul, the hero will ?
We ask ; and wait.

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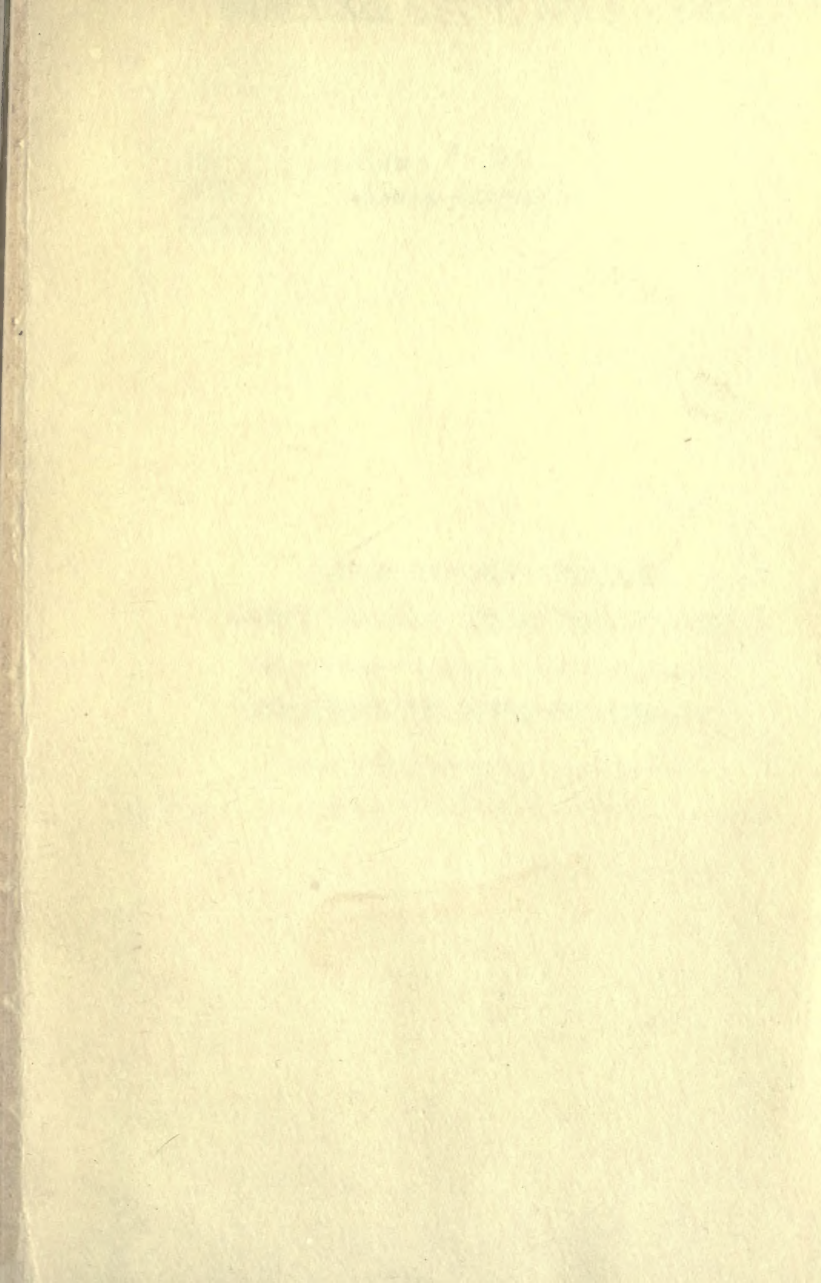
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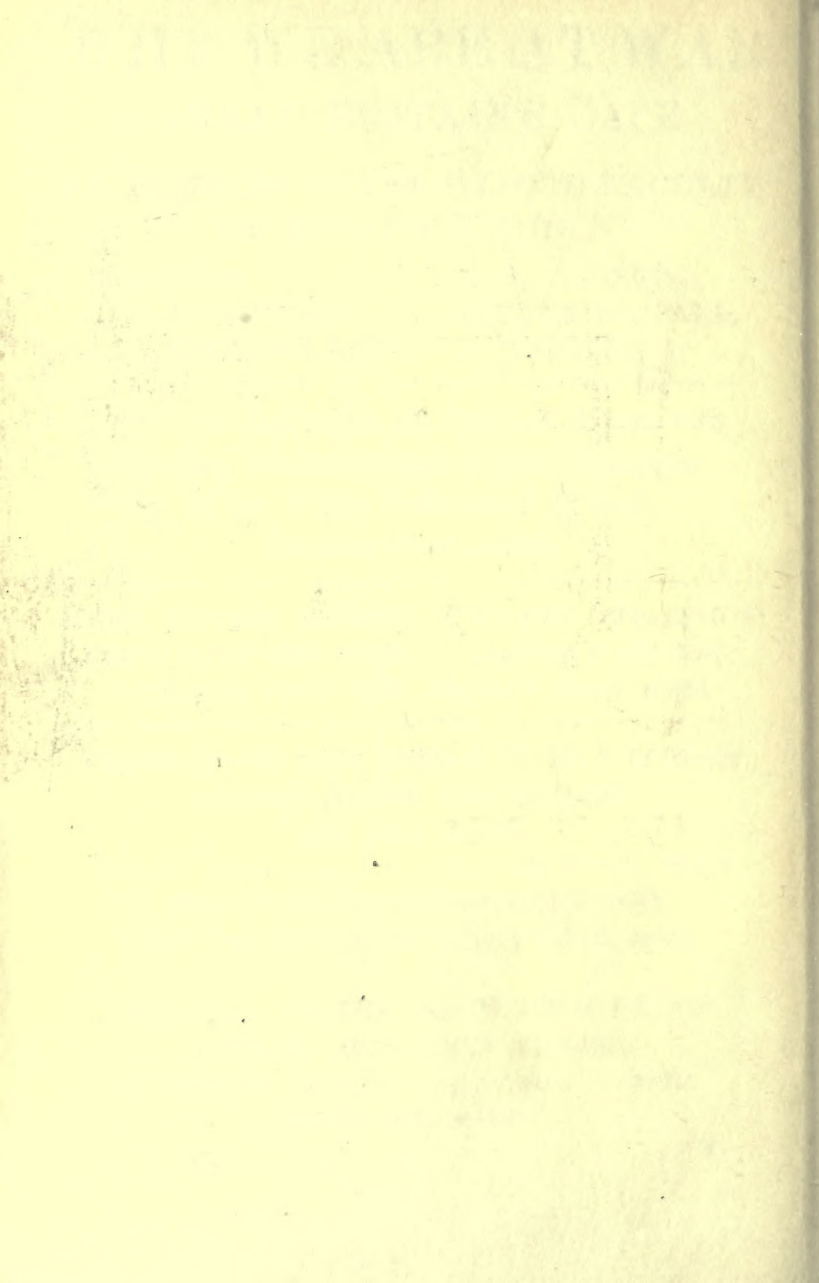
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